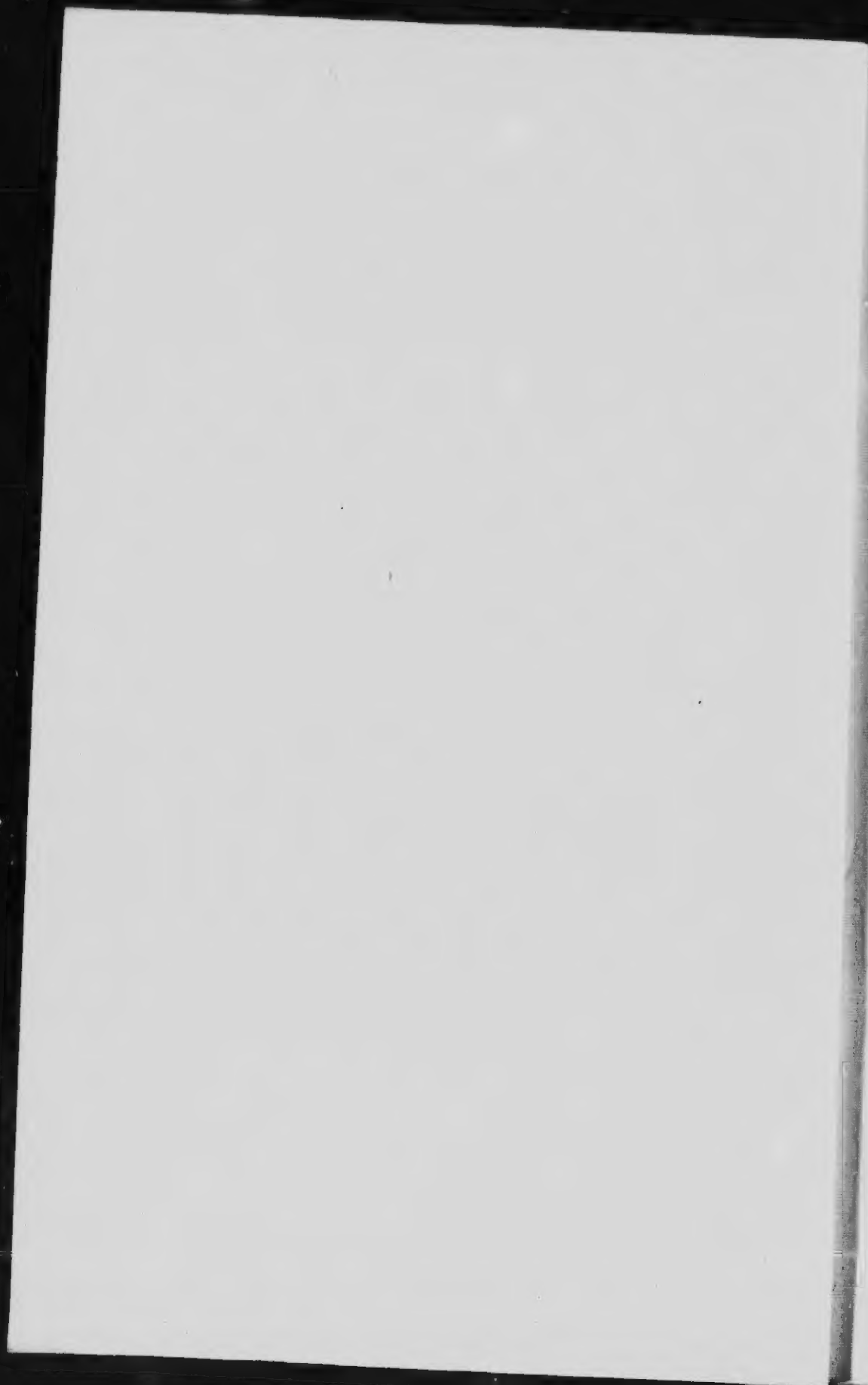


Love.

Love came at dawn when all the world was
fair,
When crimson glories, bloom and song ^{were} ~~were~~
Life;
Love came at dawn when hope's wings ^{fanned the} ~~fanned the~~
air,
And murmured, "I am life."

Love came at even when the day was done,
When heart and brain were tired, and clumber
pressed;
Love came at eve, shut out the sinking sun,
And whispered, "I am rest."

W. L. G. Campbell



SAGAS OF VASTER BRITAIN

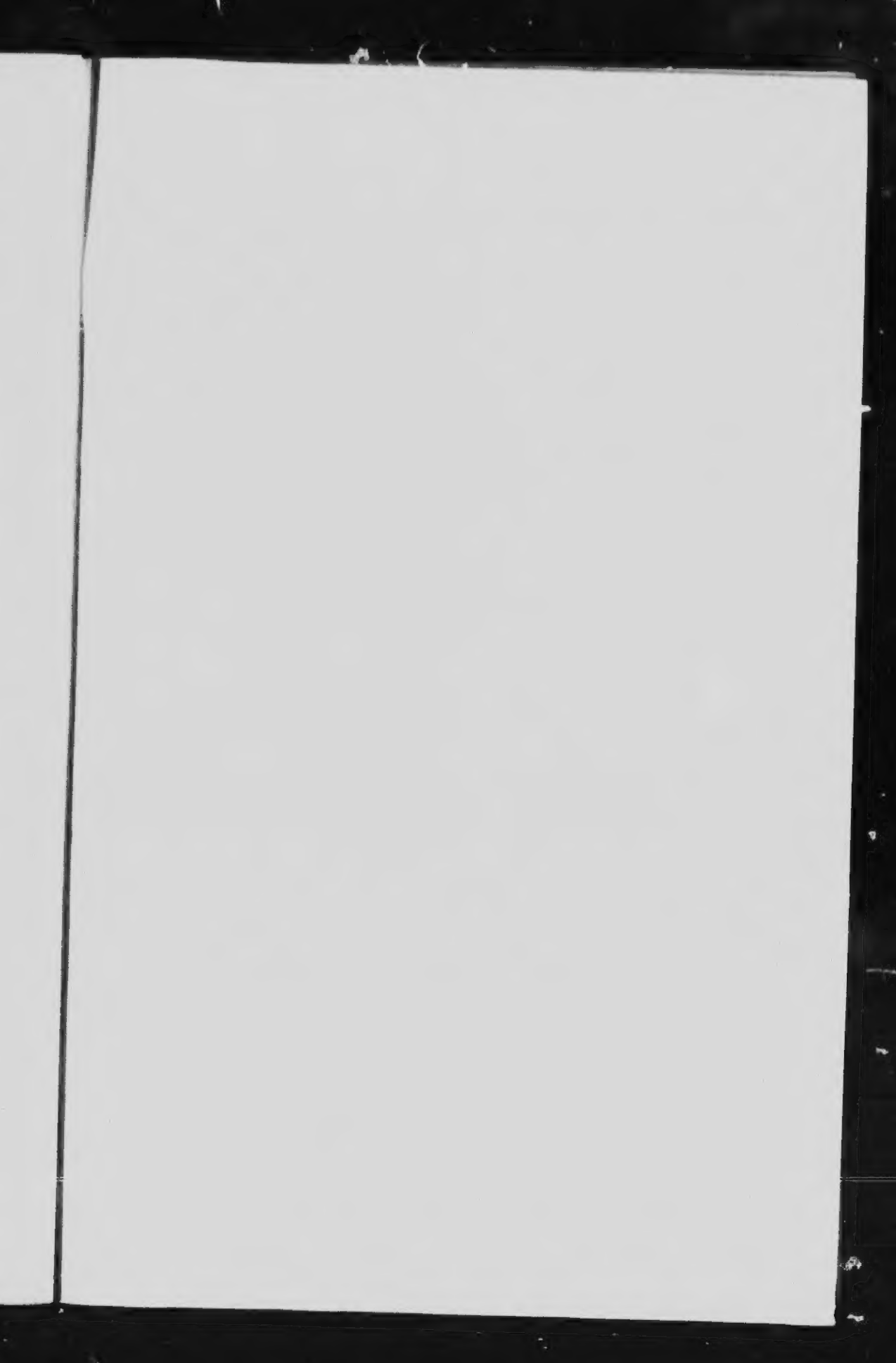




Photo: Elliot and Fry]

Wilfred Campbell

**SAGAS OF
FASTER BRITAIN**

**Poems of the Race, the Empire
and the Divinity of Man**

BY
WILFRED CAMPBELL

Wilfred Campbell

TORONTO
THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY LIMITED
1914

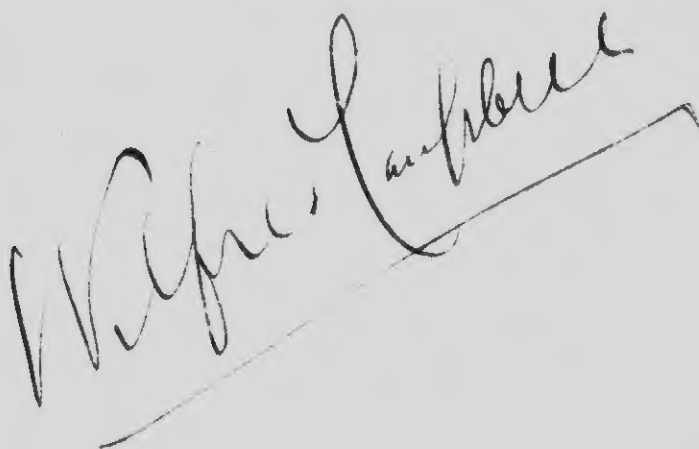


Walter Campbell

SAGAS OF VASTER BRITAIN

Poems of the Race, the Empire
and the Divinity of Man

BY
WILFRED CAMPBELL

A large, stylized handwritten signature of Wilfred Campbell, written in dark ink, slanted diagonally across the middle of the page.

TORONTO
THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY LIMITED
1914

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DEDICATED BY PERMISSION TO
FIELD-MARSHALL HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT
AND OF STRATHEARN
GOVERNOR-GENERAL
OF CANADA



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THE ELUDING ANGEL

SWEETER than music,
Stronger than joy,
Rarer than knowledge
For all worlds fain ;
Ever recurring,
Clings to the heart
That high and poignant
Poetical pain :—

Heard in the under-
Tones of the springtime,
Under the sigh of
The leaves and the grass,
Under the reflux
Winds as they pass.

Something akin to
The whisper of silence,
The magic of moonlight,
The sadness of art ;
The anguish of battle ;
The triumph of heroes
Lying so cold in
The dead tomb's heart.

THE ELUDING ANGEL

So it lies under
All of our yearning,
Deepest, remotest,
And subtlest of all ;
Like to the pinions
Of some dim angel,
Ever eluding
Our wild pursuing,
Eternally echoing
Our vain call.

IMMORTALITY

3

IMMORTALITY

HERE in this age of a grim
Material haze of the present,
This hour of a people self-willed,
Self-worshipping, self-deceived,
Of a cold and hard and denying
Spirit of crude unrest ;
When God from man seems withdrawn,
And heaven from earth estranged,
And only the things of this life
Do greatly matter ; that flower
Of the spirit of beauty and truth
All withered and banished and gone ;
Here in this hour of brute Mammon,
Unheeding, uncaring, unthrilled
By the greatness of life and its meaning ;—
I voice again the immortal,
I sing anew the divine.

O you of the hungry heart,
That spirit of love's unrest,
That deep, unsatisfied longing,
That divine discontent with all life's
Half-truths, her compromise grim,
That seething nest of despairs
Eternally writhing and gnawing
At the shuddering walls of the heart ;—

Go forth with your soul at sunrise
Or sunset ; or wander alone
'Mid earth's vast lonely places—
And doubt not, but hold in you earth
A great and invincible hope,
A lofty, indomitable courage
That you and your soul are sustained ;
That despite all the evil and sorrow,
The weakness and ~~sin~~ and decay,
This vesture, sombre, of death,
Which folds your mortality round ;
That the earth is God's, and the morning
The road you must take in the end.

DAWN IN THE JUNE WOODS

5

DAWN IN THE JUNE WOODS

WHEN over the edge of night
The stars pale one by one,
And out of his streams of light,
Rising, the great red sun

Lifteth his splendours up
Over the hush of the world,
And, draining night's ebon cup,
Leaveth some stars impearled

Still on its crystal rim,
Fading like bubbles away,
As out of their cloud-meadows dim,
The dawn winds blow in this way :

Then, bathed in cool dewy wells,
Old longings of life renew,
Till here in these morning dells
The dreamings of earth come true :

As up each sun-jewelled slope,
Over the night-hallowed land,
Wonder and Beauty and Hope
Walk silently hand in hand.

THE DREAMERS

THEY lingered on the middle heights
Betwixt the brown earth and the heaven ;
They whispered, ' We are not the night's,
But pallid children of the even.'

They muttered, ' We are not the day's,
For the old struggle and endeavour,
The rugged and unquiet ways
Are dead and driven past for ever.'

They dreamed upon the cricket's tune,
The winds that stirred the withered grasses :
But never saw the blood-red moon
That lit the spectre mountain-passes.

They sat and marked the brooklet steal
In smoke-mist o'er its silvered surges :
But marked not, with its peal on peal,
The storm that swept the granite gorges.

They dreamed the shimmer and the shade,
And sought in pools for haunted faces :
Nor heard again the cannonade
In dreams from earth's old battle-places.

They spake, ' The ages all are dead,
The strife, the struggle, and the glory ;
We are the silences that wed
Betwixt the story and the story.

THE DREAMERS

7

' We are the little winds that moan
Between the woodlands and the meadows ;
We are the ghosted leaves, wind-blown
Across the gust-light and the shadows.'

Then came a soul across those lands
Whose face was all one glad, rapt wonder,
And spake : ' The skies are ribbed with bands
Of fire, and heaven all racked with thunder.

' Climb up and see the glory spread,
High over cliff and 'scarpment yawning :
The night is past, the dark is dead,
Behold the triumph of the dawning !'

Then laughed they with a wistful scorn,
' You are a ghost, a long-dead vision ;
You passed by ages ere was born
This twilight of the days elysian.

' There is no hope, there is no strife,
But only haunted hearts that hunger
About a dead, scarce-dreamed-of life,
Old ages when the earth was younger.'

Then came by one in mad distress,
' Haste, haste below, where strong arms weaken,
The fighting ones grow less and less !
Great cities of the world are taken !

' Dread evil rolls by like a flood,
Men's bones beneath his surges whiten,
Go where the ages mark in blood
The footsteps that their days enlighten.'

THE DREAMERS

Still they but heard, discordant mirth,
The thin winds through the dead stalks ratle,
While out from far-off haunts of earth
There smote the mighty sound of battle.

Now there was heard an awful cry,
Despair that rended heaven asunder,
White pauses when a cause would die,
Where love was lost and souls went under,

The while these feebly dreamed and talked
Betwixt the brown earth and the heaven,
Faint ghosts of men who breathed and walked,
But deader than the dead ones even.

And out there on the middle height
They sought in pools for haunted faces,
Nor heard the cry across the night
That swept from earth's dread battle-places.

THE MYSTERY

WHAT is this glory nature makes us feel,
And riots so sweet within us ? Can it be
That there with man is kindred mystery
Of being, old heredity
Of bud and leaf, of pulsing plant and tree,
And earth and air ; that in some olden speech—
Ere words had being—doth our spirits reach :
Some essence akin to music, subtle, deep,
That plumbs our souls as dreams melt through
our sleep ?

Yea, it must be : for often unto me
A fallen leaf hath greater power to stir
Than mighty volumes of earth's history,
Or all the tragedy of life's great blur.
What is it ? that so little ; plant or flower,
A sunset or a sunrise, gives us wings,
Or opens doors of glory every hour
To godlike thoughts—and life's imaginings.

Yea, 'tis a greatness that about us lies ;
Within our touch—pervading air and sod,
That bounds our being—hidden from our eyes—
But inward, subtle—guiding men to God.

ENGLAND

ENGLAND, England, England,
Girdled by ocean and skies,
And the power of a world, and the heart of a race,
And a hope that never dies.

England, England, England,
Wherever a true heart beats,
Wherever the rivers of commerce flow,
Wherever the bugles of conquest blow,
Wherever the glories of liberty grow,
'Tis the name that the world repeats.

And ye who dwell in the shadow
Of the century's sculptured piles,
Where sleep our century-honoured dead
While the great world thunders overhead,
And far out miles on miles,
Beyond the smoke of the mighty town,
The blue Thames dimples and smiles;
Not yours alone the glory of old,
Of the splendid thousand years,
Of Britain's might and Britain's right,
And the brunt of British spears.

ENGLAND

II

Not yours alone, for the great world round,
Ready to dare and do,
Scot and Celt and Norman and Dane,
With the Northman's sinew and heart and brain,
And the Northman's courage for blessing or bane,
Are England's heroes too.

North and south and east and west,
Wherever their triumphs be,
Their glory goes home to the ocean-girt isle,
Where the heather blooms and the roses smile,
With the green isle under her lee ;
And if ever the smoke of an alien gun
Should threaten her iron repose,
Shoulder to shoulder against the world,
Face to face with her foes,
Scot and Celt and Saxon are one
Where the glory of England goes.

And we of the newer and vaster West,
Where the great war-banners are furled,
And commerce hurries her teeming hosts,
And the cannon are silent along our coasts,
Saxon and Gaul, Canadians claim
A part in the glory and pride and aim
Of the Empire that girdles the world.

England, England, England,
Wherever the daring heart,
By Arctic floe or torrid strand,
Thy heroes play their part ;
For as long as conquest holds the earth,
Or commerce sweeps the sea,
By orient jungle or western plain,
Will the Saxon spirit be :

ENGLAND

And whatever the people that dwell beneath,
Or whatever the alien tongue,
Over the freedom and peace of the world
Is the flag of England flung.
Till the last great freedom is found
And the last great truth be taught,
Till the last great deed be done
And the last great battle is fought ;
Till the last great fighter is slain in the last great
fight
And the war-wolf is dead in his den—
England, breeder of hope and valour and might,
Iron mother of men.

Yea, England, England, England,
Till honour and valour are dead,
Till the world's great cannons rust,
Till the world's great hopes are dust,
Till faith and freedom be fled,
Till wisdom and justice have passed
To sleep with those who sleep in the many-
chambered vast,
Till glory and knowledge are charnelled dust in
dust,
To all that is best in the world's unrest,
In heart and mind you are wed.
While out from the Indian jungle
To the far Canadian snows,
Over the East and over the West,
Over the worst and over the best,
The flag of the world to its winds unfurled,
The blood-red ensign blows.

THE HILLS AND THE SEA

Give me the hills and wide water,
 Give me the heights and the sea ;
 And take all else, 'tis living
 And heaven enough for me.
 For my fathers of old they were hillsmen,
 My sires they were sons of the sea.

Give me the uplands of purple,
 The sweep of the vast world's rim,
 Where the sun dips down, or the dawns
 Over the earth's edge swim ;
 With the days that are dead, and the old earth-tales,
 Human, and haunting, and grim.

Give me where the great surfs landward
 Break on the iron-rimmed shore,
 Where winter and spring are eternal,
 And the miles of sea-sand their floor ;
 Where wind and vastness, for ever,
 Walk by the red dawn's door.

Back from this grime of the present,
 This slavery worse than all death,
 Let me stand out alone on the highlands,
 Where there's life in the brave wind's breath ;
 Where the one wise word and the strong word
 Is the word that the great hush saith.

THE DISCOVERERS

THE DISCOVERERS

This poem is dedicated to the memory of all those great souls who, in days gone by, in the bold spirit of discovery, ventured out on the then trackless seas of the unknown West, in quest of this New World which their undaunted zeal and enterprise has won for us, as a boon to the race and a blessing to mankind.

THEY feared no unknown, saw no horizon dark,
 Counted no danger ; dreamed all seas their road
 To possible futures ; struck no craven sail
 For sloth or indolent cowardice ; steered their keels
 O'er crests of heaving ocean, leagues of brine :
 While Hope firm kept the tiller, Faith, in dreams,
 Saw coasts of gleaming continents looming large
 Beyond the ultimate of the sea's far rim.
 Thus was it ever. Souls too great for sloth
 And impotent ease, goaded by inward pain
 Of some divine, great yearning restlessness,
 Which would not sit at home on servile shores
 And take the good their fathers wrought in days
 Long-ancient time-ward—reap what others sowed ;
 But, nobler, sought to win a world their own,
 Not conquered by others, but a virgin shore
 Where men might build the future, rear new realms
 Of human effort, forgetful of the past,
 And all its ills and failure ; raising anew
 The godlike dreams of genius ; knowing only
 Immortal possibility of man
 To grow to larger vastness, holier dreams,
 Made certain in straight laws of human life

THE DISCOVERERS

15

And national vision, lived in lofty lives
Of manhood strong and noblest womanhood.

So thus it was, and is, and e'er will be !
The ill we do we leave behind us as
The phantom cloak of yesterday's sleep, thrown off
At newer waking to life's splendid dawn.
So dreamed they, eager, in those olden days ;
Saw visions in the future, round the west
Of Europe's fading sunsets ; held a hope
Of some new paradise for poor men's cure
From despotisms of old dynasties
And cruel iron creeds of warped despairs.
Hungering for light and truth and righteousness,
So launched they, setting sail toward sunset verge
Of lonely, inhospitable Ocean, hurling back
From his grey mane sad wrecks of their desires.

We know their story, read the truth where they
Knew only in man's hope and loftier soul
Which strove and dared and greatly overcame,
Conquering scorn of man and veils of doubt,
Wresting from Nature half her secret cruel
Wherewith she darkens down in glooms apart
The mystery of this planet, where we sleep
And wake and toil, redeeming high resolves,
Chaining the future to the present act.
We ponder on their daring, their vast hope,
That compassed all a planet in its dream.
We marvel at that stern defiance, where
A single man, in a degenerate age,
Would throw the gauntlet down against a world,
Defying narrow custom, small beliefs,
Strangled in lies, and staking all on one
Swift certainty of reason, based on thought,

Which read from nature, not from childish tomes
Of baseless superstitions, and dared all—
Left the kind land behind, and ventured out
On what men deemed a hideous demon waste,
An endless vortex, wherein poor souls caught
Were swept to vastness, gulfed, and swallowed down.

We wonder at this greatness, yet we know
That thus for ever shall human greatness be,
Man's only truth in life to stand alone—
Invincible power the spirit's solitude.

Beneath the sky, that marvel of earth's night,
That vast reproof of all our littleness,
That shining rebuke to our unfaithfulness,
That scorner of our despairs; 'neath its dim tent
Of fold on fold of fleecy infinities
That soul of man is but a puny thing,
A fork-like snake in its own petty fires,
Which doth not rise to some high eminence
Of human thought and vast forgetfulness
Of all this common ill and common deed,
And loom to somewhat of that stature great
That God did dream us! So those nightly souls,
Watching His stars, read nightly fixed and sure
A certainty, while every yeasty wave,
A monster mountain, roared to gulf them down.

We are a part of that great dream they dreamed.
We know wherein they failed, as all life fails.
We know the greatness they could never know,
The certainty behind that sunset veil
Which lured them on beyond its misty verge;
And we are witness that their hope was sure
And true and wise, as voice of God to men.

THE DISCOVERERS

17

We are the witnesses that they were right,
And all the small and common minds were wrong,
The scorers of their faith, the laughers-down
Of their sublime enthusiasms ; like as all
Dim ages of this world have heard and seen.

Yea, we are witnesses that they who hoped
And greatly planned, and greatly dreamed and dared
Were greater and more godlike, truer souls
And wiser in their day than those who sat
With shaking head and shallow platitude,
Made foolish vulgar prophecy of defeat ;
Yea, we are witnesses that one true man
With faith in nature his own heart and brain,
And daring, fearless, caring naught for aught,
Save his own trust in some high godlike vision,
Is greater far than all a world of men
Who are but shadows of a worn-out age
Which they have long outlived, as rotten trunks
Do mark the place where some huge oak went down.

We are the dream which they did dream ; but we,
If we are great as they were, likewise know
That man is ever onward, outward bound
To some far port of his own soul's desire,
Knowing the present ever incomplete
In love's reflection of the heart's high goal.

And now no more this Western world is deemed
A home for liberty and hope's desire.
Men learn in wisdom, as the years glide on,
And life is ever the same in East or West.
And human nature, lost in its own toils
Of earthly strivings, loses that gold thread
Of life's sincerity, repeating o'er again

■

The grim, despotic tyrannies of old,
On newer shores to freedom dedicate
By loftier souls who won this world in vain.

So is it ever, human grief and ill
And human tyranny know no special strand,
All lands alike to tyrants are a spoil,
From ills of race no continent is immune.
Men cannot flee old evils though they cross
Whole oceans of surges beating in between.
We bear with us the despot in our blood :
It is the race that speaks for ever in
Our strivings and our weakness : Nero flames
A newer Rome in each new tyranny
Which wakens a Western world to deeds of blood.

And we, who have no continents new to find,
No shadowed planet darkening back our vision,
Who know the New World but the Old World new—
The same old evil and the same old gleam
In other guise ; but 'neath the same snakehead,
Lifting ill eyes to choke our visions down
In monster folds of human servitude :—
We too, as they, are earth's discoverers ;
We likewise can be fixed in our regard ;
We likewise can be brave, sincere, and true,
Dreaming far peaks of greatness on ahead,
If we but strive and beat our weakness down ;
Setting our sails, invincible, for those ports
Beyond the common, sheltered shoals of self ;
Cleaving with daring keel those open seas
Of larger life, those healing floors of hope ;
Marking our course by those fixed stars alone,
For ever steadfast, witnesses of God,
Pointing to continents vast of holier dream.

THE MONTH OF RIPENESS

THOU languid August noon,
When all the slopes are sunny ;
When with jocund dreamy tune,
The bees are in the honey ;
When with purple flowers
Aflaming in the sun,
The drowsy hours
Thread one by one
The golden pleasaunces.

Then is heart's musing-time ;—
Then, of all the seasons
Old Earth, for inward rhyme,
Is full of golden reasons ;—
Then the ripening gourd,
The sun-kissed garden wall,
The purpling hoard,
The flocks that call
Adown the distances.

Forego the saddening tear,
Thou month without alloy ;
To younger seasons of the year
Resign the flag of joy.
But thou, be what thou art,
Full brooding to the brim
Of dreams apart
And purlieus dim
Of leafy silences.

THE WAYFARER

He woke with the dawning,
Met eyes with the sun,
And drank the wild rapture
Of living begun.

But he went with the moment
To follow the clue,
Ere the first red of dawning
Had drunk the blue dew.

Follow him, follow him,
Where the world will,
Under the sunlight
By meadow and hill.

Down the blue distance,
Round the world's rim,
Where the hosts of the future
Are horning for him.

Follow him, call to him,
Pray to him, Sweet,
Tell him the morning
Is fresh for his feet ;

Sing him the rapture,
The glamour, the gleam,
Of pearly dew-azure
That curtains the stream ;

THE WAYFARER

21

Sing the glad thrush-note
That never knew pain,
But sing him and call him
And pray him in vain.

For ere the red dewdrop
In sunlight was pearled,
He heard that mad ocean
That whelms the world.

Yea, heard that voice calling
Past sunlight and dew,
That rarest, alluringest,
Ever heart knew.

That siren of sunrise,
That weaver of songs,
Till the heart of man hearkens
And gladdens and longs,

Till o'er the blue distance,
As opens the rose,
The yearning impulsion
Of all his life goes.

And many a dragon
Chimera so grim,
Down the dream of the morning
Is vanquished by him.

Yea, sing to him, call him through
Heartache in vain ;
But the gladdest day wakened
To glory, must wane.

THE WAYFARER

And the noonday he longed for
To fierce light will burn,
And the battles he wages
Grow bitter and stern,

And the surge of life sink
To the moan of a bar,
And the hopes of the morning
Grow hollow and far ;

And the road that he follows,
Less luring and true,
Till he longs for a whiff
Of the morning he knew.

For he hears thy far singing,
That lures not in vain,
Till he comes to thy beauty
Of morning again.

But the roads of returning
Are never the same
As the sweet dewy meadows
Of morning we came.

But the song of alluring
Is ever as true,
To lead the heart back
To the beauty it knew.

And vain the mad magic
Where life's glories burn,
For the heart of the yearner
Who longs to return.

THE WAYFARER

23

For he hears that voice calling,
Voiced never in vain,
To world-heart weary
For all dreamings fain.

And he hears the low grasses,
The green tents of sod,
From rooftrees of slumber
As voices of God.

And the spinning and turning,
Of madness amain,
Fade out from his dreaming
As night from the pane ;

When the rosy-red splendour
In dew-dreams impearled,
From ashes of slumber,
Lifts over the world.

Yea, back to those echoes
Of bugles that blew,
Heart-weary, life-broken,
He wanders to you ;

Yea, back to his truest,
Those far broken gleams
Of that rosy-red, morning-lit
House of his dreams,

Where all hours were splendid,
And all hearts held true,
In those glory-lit visions
Of beauty and you.

THE WAYFARER

Yea, call to him, cry to him,
Mother of all ;
You lit his youth's torches,
You saw their flames fall.

You loved him, upheld him,
This child of your breast ;
And now give him surcease
In dreamings and rest.

Your note was the one note
He heard in the fray,
That bore him far out
In the heat of the day ;

Your call is the one call
That beckons him home,
When day-fires darken
By forest and foam.

When o'er all the heartache,
The visions untrue,
Love draws her dim curtains
Of duskfire and dew.

While the bells ring for slumber
As out of the deep,
Come pleading those velvet-winged
Spirits of sleep.

And there at your doorways
Of slumber he stands,
Like him of old Horeb,
And sees his heart's lands ;

THE WAYFARER

25

While under the white awe
Of planets that swim,
Knows dawning and even
As one world to him.

ODE

TO A ROMAN ALTAR IN THE GROUNDS AT ALDBOROUGH
MANOR, BOROUGHBRIDGE, YORKSHIRE

To what strange sylvan god wast thou set up ?
What ancient piety evolved thy form
And gave thee being ? What influence, divine,
Taught heavenward uses symbolised in stone,
And made thee Fear's first shrine ?

By what far shore
Of dream, Atlantean, Moachan remorse,
Didst thou become a part of man's first worship,
In sad, dim gropings toward the dread unknown ?

Thou, older far than oldest, earliest Rome,
Spartan glory, exquisite Attic taste ;
Ere Nineveh and Edom thou wert dreamed !
On such as thee were olden gods invoked,
And loves and hatreds, hopes and longings
blessed,
By those lorn children, half divine, half earth,
Remote, Erythean, of the early world.

And thou, so old, yet ever eternally young,
In Art's pure dream austere, Corinthian ;—
What centuried memories cling about thee yet ?
What rites Elusian, orgies Bacchanal ?
What sacrificial pomps and adorations ?

What longings, sorrows, what dim old-world woes,
Human despairs and miseries, dread and gone,
Have beat against thy dumb, unanswering heart ?

On thy smooth scrolls did some shy Roman maid
Place her heart's vows, her secret offerings ?
Did Intrigue hideous desecrate thy beauty ?
And was mailed War at thy side consecrate ?
Did reeking Victory, in bronzed helm,
And boastful Triumph before thee chant rude pæans
To some grim god ? or Roman matron fair
Thy slim zone bind with garlands to some dim,
Benign, shy goddess of old woods and streams ?

Now, late, thou lingerest in this English garden,
Lorn, forsaken, centuries since that age,
Ancient and gone, which gave thee being, passed ;
A dream in stone of some bygone belief,
Some olden, dead, exquisite superstition,
Some primal effort to appease the dark,
And lay that ghost of fear which haunts us yet
In this late twilight of a jaded world.

Mute, holy symbol of earth's greatness gone !
All Art's divine, austere simplicity !
Thou monument of mystery and power,
Dead beauty, and imagination rare
Of classic Greece and mighty martial Rome !
Here in thy precincts drenched with honey dew
Of ancientness and poesy's elfin dream,
Once more from out thy shady coverts creep
Shy sylphs and fauns ; creatures secret, strange ;
Cruel and lewd or gentle ; rude, refined,
Lorn, furtive deities of the early world.
Here Bacchus and his pards ; pale river nymphs ;

Satyrs and shy dryads ; children, wild,
Of stream and mountain : last of all, great Pan,
Long banished, myrtle-crowned, to view once more,
As in those pristine ages dim, remote,
Ere Greece knew Homer or the Tiber Rome,
His ancient island's haunted woods and fields.

ODE TO SILENCE

THINE are the inaudible harmonies that keep
The brooding breathings of the night's glad lute,
When in those pauses 'twixt her sleep and sleep
All holy tunes be mute.

All beauteous seasons thou dost guard and bless,
The tremulous dawn, hushed noon, and cooling night,
Earth, air, and ocean, thy dim palaces,
Filled with divine delight.

The fathomless wells of heaven's deeps are thine ;
Thou watchest over night's infinitudes ;
The starry vast, within whose chant divine
No dissonant chord intrudes.

Thine are those oceans dim, untenanted,
The unprescient homes of pregnancies to be,
Filling the lonely realms of mighty dread
With formless majesty.

Thou keepest the dewy caverns of the night
About majestic risings of the moon,
When over the breathing woods her phosphor light
Rises to silvern noon.

Thou lovest those lonely avenues of light
In the sun-kindled woods at early morn,
Upon the rosy rim of fading night
And cloudy meadows shorn ;

Filling the joyous airs with summer fraught,
And morning's slopes with dewy odours bland ;
Here with glad Fancy and slow-wingèd Thought
Thou wanderest hand in hand.

Thou holdest those intervals of peace that dwell
About the caverned shores of ocean furled,
When the long midnight hush or noonday swell
Slumbers about the world.

But dearest of all thou lovest that pensive hour,
That holy hour about the fringe of eve,
When sunset dreams in lonely woods have power
Imaginings to weave ;—

When all the sunset world seems ages old
In sad romance and achings of dead wrong,
And all the beauty of life is poignant gold
In the hermit thrush's song.

Then down the long, dim memories of old woods
Facing for ever the far-westerling sun,
I'd dream for aye through hallowed solitudes
Where magic echoes run ;—

Seeking the majesty of peace wherein thou hidest,
Those golden rivers of being without alloy ;
Knowing the infinite of dream is where thou bidest,
Thou and that calm joy.

POETRY

EARTH's godlike dream will never wholly die.
It lingers while we linger, base or true—
A part of all this being. Life may change,
Old customs wither, creeds become as naught,
Like autumn husks in rainwinds ; men may kill
All memory of the greatness of the past,
Kingdoms may melt, republics wane and die,
New dreams arise and shake this jaded world ;
But that rare spirit of song will breathe and live
While beauty, sorrow, greatness hold for men
A kinship with the eternal ; until all
That earth holds noble wastes and fades away.
Wrong cannot kill it. Man's material dream
May scorn its uses, worship baser hope
Of life's high purpose, build about the world
A brazen rampart : through it all will come
The iron moan of life's unresting sea ;
And through its floors, as filtered blooms of dawn,
Those flowers of dream will spring, eternal, sweet,
Speaking for God and man ; the infinite mystery
Will ever fold life round ; the mighty heart
Of earth's humanity ceaseless throb and beat
As round this globe the vasty deeps of sky,
And round earth's shores the wide, encompassing sea.
Outside this rind of hardened human strife
There lies this mantle of mighty majesty
Thought's cunning cannot probe, its science plumb.
Earth's schools of wisdom, in their darkness, spell
The common runes of knowledge ; but there lies

A greatness vast behind this taper gleam,
That stands for somewhat lore hath never weighed
In all its ponderings of thought-pulsing brain.
Shakespeare, the Mighty, touched it as he passed.
The Man in Uz did feel it, shook the folds
Of some great garment's hem of One who passed.
The vasty gates of Orion at one stride.
All earth's high souls have felt it in their time,
Have risen to this mighty deep in thought,
Or worshipped in the blackness and the gleam.

Dream not because life's taper flame grows dim,
Man's soul grows wasted gazing on dull gold,
His spirit shrunk with canker of life's ill,
That earth's great nights will darken their splendours
down,

Her dawns will fail to rise, this mighty world
Will cease to roll its vast appointed way ;
And beauty and love, and all that man holds sweet
For youth and age, the effort glad, the joy,
The memory of old greatness gone before,
Not hold their magic 'neath the Almighty Will.

Yea, 'tis eternal as the wave, the sky,
Changing for ever, never wholly passing,
A part of all this dream that will not die,
It lives for ever. Years may fade and pass,
Youth's dream decline to age and death's decay,
Ills and sharp griefs, despairs and agonies come :
While earth remains her spirit will not fail.
That greatness back of all will still console,
Man's life will still be sweet, its purpose glad,
The morn will still be morning, and the night
Star splendours arched above the eternal peace,
The eternal yearning, and the eternal dream.

THE VANGUARD

Out of the grey light
 Into the daylight,
 We are his battlemead
 Riding along ;
 Century-laden,
 To some dim aidenn,
 Hope in our vanguard,
 Courage, our song.
 ' Check up the curb there ! '
 ' Firm in the stirrup there ! '
 ' Steady ! men, steady ! '
 ' Riding along ! '

Out of the grim light
 Into the dim light,
 Under the morning airs,
 Where the pale stars
 Fade with the dying
 Murk of night flying,
 Into the smoke-mists,
 Over earth's bars—
 Where the dim sorrows
 Of long-dead to-morrows
 Sink into ashes,
 Crumble to night—

THE VANGUARD

Cheerfully, gravely,
Manfully, bravely,
Ride we, ride we,
Into His light.

There was an inn, we
Rang to begin, we
Thundered its rafters
With generous song—
There a low mound, we
Left a brave comrade,
Worn of the journey,
Riding along.

There was a battle fought,
Fiercely the blades rang,
Horseman and charger
Grappled the foe—
Hard spent and hard hit,
Teeth clenched and foaming bit,
Out of the battle-smoke,
Forward we go.

Bravely faced, bravely won,
Nobly died, nobly done,
Lifting the firm face,
Riding along :
Always to hillward,
Truth and God-will-ward,
Never toward darkness,
Never toward wrong ;
Not dumb cattle ! men,
We are God's battlemen,
Waging His fierce fights
Under the night,

THE VANGUARD

35

Under the smoke-mists,
Through the dim centuries,
Ride we, ride we,
Into His light.

Hold up the head there !
Quicker the tread there !
Eyes on the mountain heights !
Lift the old song !
' Bravely the right goes,
Down with the dread foes,
Evil and sorrow,
Hate and old wrong !
Doubt but the battle-smoke,
Dusk but the morning's cloak,
Care and despairing but
Dreams of the night ;
Roll the grey mists up !
Drain deep the dawn-cup !
Ride we, ride we,
Into His light ! '

Old men and young men,
Cheering the faint ones,
Bearing the weak ones,
Chiding the strong ;
Over the dead past,
Ice-cold, furnace-blast,
Riding along ;
We are His valiant hearts,
Wending His journey dread,
Eyes to the hills ahead,
Hearken our song :—
' Watch for His dawning ! mark,
Sorrow but the shrivelled bark,

THE VANGUARD

Love the white kernel sap ;
Hatred and wrong
But the fierce, sudden hail,
Rattling our iron mail,
Riding along.'

Yea, as we thunder, we
Know earth's old wonder, we
Feel all about us
Her splendour and tears ;
Her might and her glory,
Her centuried story,
Her weird, blind caravan
Down the dead years.
Her grief and her wisdom,
Her heart-breaks and yearning,
Her legends of iron-eaten,
Blood-crust wars :—
Her loves and despairings,
Wrecks of old dynasties,
Barbarous ; splendid and
Old as the stars :—
They who look down on us,
Cold in their far-light,
Orient, mystical,
Under the night ;
Weird in their silence,
Grim, fixed witnesses,
Long, of earth's struggles,
Her great grim graveyards,
Of passion and might.
But under we thunder,
Charge, battle, and blunder,
Out of the night-mists
Unto the day,

THE VANGUARD

37

Led by an impulse,
A fierce joy and heart-hope,
Older and stronger
And greater than they.
Sound the clear bugle there !
Wide let the summons blare !
Challenge the centuries,
Fearless of wrong !
Bury that dead face !
Strong heart, fill his place !
Tenderly, manfully,
Riding along !
Eyes to the right, ahead !
Grim be the way we tread,
Sound down the silence, murk,
Hope's golden horn !
Sweet, sweet ! silver clear !
Challenging despair and fear,
Though life be at its neap,
Death is but the morning sleep
Ere day be born.

Close up amain there !
Curb on that rein there !
Eyes hillward and Godward,
Forging ahead !
Down the dread journey,
Flashing the stern eye,
Out on dim iron-peaks
Lifetimes ahead !
Searching the night-line,
Murk's fading white line,
For the dawn's message,
For the day's red ;

THE VANGUARD

Sinking old sorrows
In nobler to-morrows,
Ringing the levin
With earth's battle-song ;
Hugging the after-
Tears of old laughter,
Hopeward and Godward,
Riding along.

Eyes to the front there !
Iron 'gainst the brunt there !
Jarring the battle shock,
Under the night ;
From earth's weird wonder
We thunder, we thunder,
Out from the centuries'
Battle and blight ;
Clear, clear, our bugles, clear,
Challenging despair and fear,
Ride we, ride we,
Into His light.

EARTH

MYSTICAL ash of all being,
Tomb and womb of all time,
Healing, destroying, upbuilding,
Receiving, riving apart ;
Cool and warm for rest,
Or hot for burgeoning life ;
Clod ; yet pulsate with being ;
Infinite, ever-recurring,
Dark, sad house of all joy.

Night that dawns in the bud
Whose perfect day is the flower ;
Earth, red mantle of ruin,
Beautiful shroud of decay,
Marriage-bed of the cosmos.
Love that gives and receives,
Nubian nurse of all beauty,
Swart, ultimate fondler of joy ;
Out of thy bosom all come,
Back to thy bosom return,
Where, in thy mystical chambers,
Purified, sifted, restored,
All life, dismantled, outworn,
Obeys the inevitable law.

Red Egypt rose from thy dust ;
Greece, thine ineffable bloom,
Child of thy magical beauty,

EARTH

Woke like a lotus at dawn.
All the mad might of the ages,
Their sad fated beauty, their joy,
Their passionate hopes and despairs,
Arose from thy bosom, and back
To thy yearning bosom return.

And thou, Swart Mother, O Wise !
Thou to thy children wert kind.
Thou smoothedst the saddest of brows,
Held to thy breast all lovers,
Folded their beauty of limb,
As thou dost fold to thy rest
Thy rarest and fairest of bloom.

And never undaunted spirit
Trod like a god thy rime,
But thou gavest him splendid rest,
Where in thy sepulchred chambers,
Thy great imperishable sleep,
Those kings of thy heart's best joy.

LIFE'S HARP

41

THE POET

THE poet is slave to none
But his own restless heart ;
There streams of passion run,
And springs of music start.

LIFE'S HARP

I AM a sad æolian lyre
On which the wind of destiny sings
Earth's discords, or her glad desire,
Until some dread hand breaks my strings :—

Until some dread hand makes me mute,
And earth's great organ tones, her roar
Of autumn on his wintry shore,
Old Ocean's voice
Bidding his mighty hosts rejoice ;
Spring's melodies that thrill and soar,
Her viol, oboe, lute, and flute
Reverberate round my heart no more.

AN AUGUST REVERIE

THERE is an autumn sense subdues the air,
Though it is August and the season still
A part of summer, and the woodlands fair.
I hear it in the humming of the mill,
I feel it in the rustling of the trees
That scarcely shiver in the passing breeze.

'Tis but a touch of winter ere his time,
A presaging of sleep and icy death,
When skies are rich and fields are in their prime,
And heaven and earth commingle in a breath :—
When hazy airs are stirred with gossamer wings,
And in shorn fields the shrill cicada sings.

So comes the slow revolving of the year,
The glory of nature ripening to decay,
When in those paths by which, through loves austere,
All men and beasts and blossoms find their way,
By steady easings of the Spirit's dream,
From sunlight past the pallid starlight's beam.

Nor should the spirit sorrow as it passes,
Declining slowly by the heights it came ;
We are but brothers to the birds and grasses,
In our brief coming and our end the same :
And though we glory godlike in our day,
Perchance some kindred law their lives obey.

AN AUGUST REVERIE

43

There are a thousand beauties gathered round :
The sound of waters falling over-night,
The morning scents that steam from the fresh ground,
The hair-like streaming of the morning light
Through early mists and dim, wet woods where brooks
Chatter, half seen, down under mossy nooks.

The ragged daisy starring all the fields,
The buttercup abrim with pallid gold,
The thistle and burr-flowers hedged with prickly shields,
All common weeds the draggled pastures hold,
With shrivelled pods and leaves, are kin to me,
Like-heirs of earth and her maturity.

They speak a silent speech that is their own,
These wise and gentle teachers of the grass ;
And when their brief and common days are flown,
A certain beauty from the year doth pass :—
A beauty of whose light no eye can tell,
Save that it went ; and my heart knew it well.

I may not know each plant as some men know them,
As children gather beasts and birds to tame ;
But I went 'mid them as the winds that blow them,
From childhood's hour, and loved without a name.
There is more beauty in a field of weeds
Than in all blooms the hothouse garden breeds.

For they are nature's children ; in their faces
I see that sweet obedience to the sky
That marks these dwellers of the wilding places,
Who with the season's being live and die ;
Knowing no love but of the wind and sun,
Who still are nature's when their life is done.

They are a part of all the haze-filled hours,
The happy, happy world all drenched with light,
The far-off, chiming click-clack of the mowers,
And yon blue hills whose mists elude my sight ;
And they to me will ever bring in dreams
Far mist-clad heights and brimming rain-fed streams.

In this dream August air, whose ripened leaf,
Pausing before it puts death's glories on,
Deepens its green, and the half-garnered sheaf
Gladdens the haze-filled sunlight, love hath gone
Beyond the material, trembling like a star,
To those sure heights where all Thought's glories are.

And Thought, that is the greatness of this earth
And man's most inmost being, soars and soars
Beyond the eye's horizon's outmost girth,
Garners all beauty, on all mystery pores :—
Like some ethereal fountain in its flow,
Finds heavens where the senses may not go.

HOW LONESOME THE SOUND OF THE WIND
IN THE EAR OF THE DAY

How lonesome the sound of the wind
In the ear of the day,
As it beats in the heart's troubled chambers,
Repeating for aye
The sad low dreams of the past
And its memories grey :—
How lonesome the sound of the wind
In the ear of the day

How lonesome the voice of the wind
In the ear of the night,
Under the eaves of the casement,
Sobbing so light—
With the ghosts of the years that are dead,
In the pale moonlight :
Those memories ghostly and grey,
O they tap at the windows of Thought,
And they stay, and they stay :
And they whisper and linger, and stay !

THE QUESTION

I

HAVE we come to the outermost wall
Of this terrible temple of time,
To find it but iron after all,
A horrible gaol of the soul,
A prison whose walls are a shard
Of cold, implacable fact ;
Where, through the dim centuries gone,
The poor, weak eons of men
Have circled in bubbles of joy,
To find but a shroud of despair,
Cabined and crushed at the last ?

And this : Is this but the end ?
Have we fathomed the secret in vain ?
Was man but a last blind coil
Of the brute evolution of time,
Unwinding itself in the dark ?
Or the full-blown rose of a race
Whose scent and whose petals are gone ?
Was the law : Aspire till ye die,
For ye die when ye cease to aspire ?
Is it true we have fathomed the dark,
Probed the deeps to the edge of the black
Till the fiat goes forth, Ye are done ?
Is it all ? And beyond it, what next ?
Doth there glimmer the thread of a dawn ?

II

God !
We utter the sound of a word,
And power dissolves into naught,
And vanity crumbles in dust ;
We, who have reached the bare wall,
Have fathomed this prison of dark.
Stand naked in awe of a name.
We, who have balanced the ' all,'
Weighed the dreams of the past in a scale
And found them but vanishing dust,
Here, in the end of the days,
In this last high poise of a stair
Built out of the quarries of Thought,
Wrought slow in the workhouse of Truth,
Our knowledge and wisdom all gone,
Like children all frightened and shamed,
Stand in awe at the sound of a name ;
As hosts that, huddled at night
From the rude cruel riot of rout,
Stay, fearful and doubting, dismayed,
'Mid the grim, unknowable dark,
For the glad, kind trumpet that calls
From the far, white comfort of dawn.

So we, who dreamed that we scaled
The high white mountains of Thought,
From our ruined Babel of pride
In the knowledge of self and of God,
Turn back from the jargon of tongues,
That scoff and clamour and cry,
To the wonder and awe of the child ;
And plead in our weakness and doubt
At the barriers, muffled, of dark

THE QUESTION

That reach through the spaces of Thought
To the far-off vastness of God.

III

To the end ? Have we really begun ?
Have we yet even entered that gate,
That one wicket-gate of the soul,
Which leads to the city of life ?
That we say we have come to the wall ;
That we grope, like the blind, in the dark
For the slow closing in of the walls
Of this grim torture-prison of life,
Where casement on casement fades out,
Till the last narrow pane disappears
On the confined despair of the soul,
And the narrow iron shard echoes back
The unseen executioner's stroke ?

Is this but the end and the all,
The blind, grim climax of time ?
Is God but necessities' will,
Where chance for an eon pursues
The rhythmic returns of a force ?
Or a flame that flickers one way ?
Or a huge grim hammer that beats
All out on the anvil of time ;
All out, till the echoes repeat
Each caverned black edge of the void ?

And this trembling dame of the soul,
In its hollow-built shard of the skull,
That flashes, then flickers and dies ?

What of it ? So fickle, so dim,
A candle-dip spark in the space ;

THE QUESTION

49

That it measures the infinite void,
That it yearns to fill all with its hope,
Its love, its desire, and its dream,
That would grow to the stature of God ?

What is it ? So mystically small ;
So infinite, vast in its aim ;
So great in its yearning and growth ;
It would leap to the light of the stars,
Would sound the abysses of space,
And measure the span of the worlds ?

Those magical windows it throws
Open wide to the wonders of life,
That sympathy subtler than thought,
This subconscious dreaming that doubts
If waking be nightmare to sleep,
That leads to the real hidden world,
That world whose wonder pursues
Even here in this prison of time,
When the walls of this earth crumble down,
And the veils of the senses grow thin,
That shut from the realms beyond.

This hearing so delicate, fine,
This exquisite sense of the chords
Beaten out from the fibres of sound.

The magical world of the eye,
That catches all colours, all blends
Of mystical morning and night.

Weird memory, wove of all hints
Of the marvellous dreams of the past.

THE QUESTION

Strange thought, that probes ocean and land,
Man's soul, and the infinite void,
Builds the future, illumines the past,
Measures, weighs, judges, pardons, and damns.
Governs hearing, sight, memory, all ;
Lord-Seer of all gates of delight ;
Standing out on the mountains of dream.

Then, greater than all, even love,
That yearns through the eons of time,
That throbs through the hates and despairs,
Built out of the passions of men ;
Yea, this above all leavens all,
Filters down through the roots of the world
To the dry, hidden heart of all things,
Waters all deserts of drought,
Spears million meadows with green,
Up-burgeons all blossom and fruit.

THE DRYAD'S HOUSE

51

THE DRYAD'S HOUSE

THIS cool and glooming summer wood
Is wise and silent in its mood,

For ever moving in its dream
Of breathing leaf and sunny gleam.

Whatever voice within is heard
Of stir of leaf or whirl of bird,

Without its trance is ever one
Of breathing sleeping shade and sun.

The gleaming gold of summer fields
Dreams through its green of leafy shields,

And windows of the shining wind,
With grey trunks looming dim behind,

Grotesque and ancient ; all their peace
The dreams of gods of olden Greece ;—

As though in ages long ago,
Before their dreams began to grow,

Some startled, fleeing dryad hid
Within this leafy coverlid,

THE DRYAD'S HOUSE

Enmeshed her silvern reveries here,
And filled its shadows with her fear,

And all the woodland mind inwrought
With golden filagree of thought

And maiden fancies, pensive spun,
From purpled skeinings of the sun,

Woven on sunbeam-shuttled looms,
Dim, luminous, of these leafy rooms.

THE WIND DANCER

WHEN ripened Summer dreams and sleeps,
And her hushed silence teems
With golden gleam of mystic drowse
And silvern trance of dreams ;

And all the woods are held in moods
Of slumber sunbeam spun,
There is an elfin dancer light,
Who dances in the sun,

And stands and claps his shining hands
And bids the mirth move on
Of some invisible, mystic rout
The slumbrous day upon.

And they, the revellers, dim, unseen,
Who chase his phantom mood ;
Perchance the naiads of the stream,
The dryads of the wood.

For when a wind-breath wakes the world
And stirs each drowsèd tree,
Like magic silver works his bow
In fiddlings merrily.

And all his elfin revellers dance
By glint of wood and stream,
Till all the drowsèd day about
Goes dancing in his dream.

THE WIND DANCER

And when in shrouded moonlight glooms
The woodland sighs and frets,
Along the snowy dream he shakes
His silvern castanets ;

Till phantom creatures of the night,
Shy satyrs, gnomes, and fauns,
Foot to his music mad and sweet
Along the mossy lawns.

He is the master of the mirth
Of field and stream and tree ;
And of the dreamers of the wood,
The lord of revels he.

Till Summer and her dream depart
And leaf and gleam be done,
He holds the whole world's laughing heart,
This dancer in the sun.

SEBASTIAN CABOT

I

VENICE and England cradled,
Could this seaman be
Other than Ocean's child,
With heart less restless than that vast and wild
Great heart of the thrilling sea ?
Wakened to her long thunders,
Cradled in her soft voice,
Could other voice of all earth's voices sweet
Make his stern heart rejoice ?
Yea, this was better than all, greater than all to him,
Truer than youth's mad whim,
The only love of his youth, the only lore of his age,
To gaze on her vast tumultuous scroll,
To pore on her wrinkled page ;—
For he was very soul of her soul,
And she meet mother for him.

II

Over the hazy distance,
Beyond the sunset's rim,
For ever and for ever
Those voices called to him.
Westward, westward, westward,
The sea sang in his head ;
At morn in the busy harbour,
At nightfall on his bed ;

SEBASTIAN CABOT

Westward ! westward ! westward !
Over the line of breakers,
Out of the distance dim,
For ever the foam-white fingers
Beckoning, beckoning him.

III

This was no common spirit,
This sailor of old Bristowe,
Not one of the mart-made helots
Such as the world doth know ;
But a bronzed and rugged veteran
Adrift in the vanguard's flow,
A son of the world's great highway
Where the mighty storm-winds blow.

IV

All honour to this grand old pilot
Whose flag is struck, whose sails are furled,
Whose ship is beached, whose voyage ended ;
Who sleeps somewhere in sod unknown,
Without a slab, without a stone,
In that great island sea-impearled ;
Yea, reverence with honour blended
For this old seaman of the past,
Who braved the leagues of ocean hurled,
Who out of danger knowledge rended,
And built the bastions sure and fast
Of that great bridgeway grand and vast
Of golden commerce round the world.

All honour ! Yea, a day shall come,
If glory lives in human rhyme,

SEBASTIAN CABOT

57

When our poor faltering lips are dumb,
A greater and more splendid time,
When larger men of mightier aim
Shall do meet honour to his name.

Yea, honour ! only greatness keeps
Its sanctuary where this reclin'd sleeper,
This old Venetian, Briton born
Who held of fear a hero's scorn,
Who nailed his colours to the mast
Who sought in reverence for the truth
And found it in the rifting bark
Of those broad furrows of the east :
Who knew no honours, held no state,
But in his ruggedness was great ;
Who, like some sea-shell, in him tell
The universe of ocean dwelt,
Whose whole true being Nature cast,
Like his own ocean spaces, vast.

v

Yea, he is dead, this mighty seaman !
Four long centuries ago,
Beating westward, ever westward,
Beating out from old Bristowe,
Saw he far, in visions lifted,
Down the golden sunset's glow,
Through the bars of twilight rifted,
All the glories that we know.
Beating westward, ever westward,
Over heaving leagues of brine ;
Buffeted by Arctic scurries,
Languid trade-winds from the line,
With a courage heaven-gifted
And a fortitude divine.

SEBASTIAN CABOT

Yea, he is dead, but who shall say
That all the splendid deeds he wrought,
That all the lofty truths he taught
(If truth be knowledge nobly sought),
Are dead and vanished quite away.
Nay, nay, he lives, and such as he,
In every lofty human dream,
In every true sublimity
That splendours earth and makes it teem
With inward might and majesty,
This grand old pilot of Bristowe,
Incarnate, comes to earth again,
As when, four hundred years ago,
He swept, in storm and shine and snow,
Athwart the thunders of the main.

VI

Greater far than shaft or storied fane,
Than bronze and marble blent,
Greater than all the honours he could gain
From a nation's high intent ;
He sleeps alone in his great isle, unknown,
With the chaik-cliffs all around him for his
mighty graveyard stone,
And the league-long sounding roar
Of old Ocean for evermore
Beating, beating, about his rest,
For fane and monument.

THE MYSTERY

WHEN autumn's silence tranced the skies,
And all life held its breath,
Unto Rosanna's lips and eyes
Came the white moth of death,—

That moth whose wings are feathered light,
From out oblivion's deep,
With magic pinions, petalled white,
Of folded sleep on sleep,—

And fluttered dim and vague and grey,
Above her lips and brow :
And other beauties gild life's day
With other glories now.

For earth's hushed pallor of the morn,
And love's dim trance of night,
From out the realms of sleep, reborn,
Fell on her soft and white,

With those pale dreams of eld which tame
The tide of the heart's wild will :
And all that mask of love became
A mystery white and still.

AHMET

This poem is founded on an old legend of North Africa, related by the late R. G. Haliburton, the noted ethnologist. According to tradition the ancient races of North Africa believed the constellation of the Pleiades to be the souls of a chieftain and six warriors slain in battle, who are shut out from heaven and doomed to wander forever through space in search of the soul of the eighth warrior, which is identified with the lost Pleiad.

BEYOND the moving mists and shadowed night,
Towered the iron mountains dark and stern,
And out of the far horizon's sullen edge,
Over the river's pallid, shimmering flow,
The night-winds stirred amid the lonely dead,
Grim, white, fixed faces toward the inscrutable skies,
Where, silent and cold, the unanswering stars looked
down.

And Ahmet raised him from the battle-field,
Where stunned he lay, beneath a Tartar horse
Huge, stiff and dead, transfixed by a spear;
And left the awful plateau of the dead,
And stood upon the high-raised river bank,
Beneath the white stars of the wintry heaven,
And moved himself, and beat the life-blood back
Into the death-like torpor of his veins,
And looked abroad, where all the night lay still
And dim with murk far over that lone waste.
Leagues to the north, under the mighty Bear,
Folded in fog, a fleeting silver dream,

The river moved and sang into the dark,
Under the frosty splendour of the stars.
And Ahmet stood and gazed into the night,
And lifted his face up to those watchful lights
That looked from out their lonely homes on him ;
And saw the Pleiades, a tangled mist
Of moveless jewels in the sky's blue deep,
Or pale grape-cluster in some great god's hand.

And felt the old religion of his race—
A nomad people on the northern steppes,
Who wandered from place to place tracking their gods—
The stern, white wanderers of the trackless heaven—
Beat in the stirring pulses of his blood.
And Ahmet prayed in his heart's agony
Unto the fathers of his race, the gods,
For his own people in their distant home,
And for himself on this lone, desolate waste,
And the great dead who, battling through that day,
Went to the gods from off their foemen's spears.
Then rang his song of triumph to the night,
Of those his blade loosed to the land of death,
Treading the carnage on that awful field ;
Then ceased, nor ever echo answered there,
Save the far moaning of some mountain beast
Haunting the jungle by some night-ward shore.
And never a sound came over that lone waste,
Where the far mountains raised their iron heads,
And the great river sang its sleep below.
Then strode he past the pallor of the night,
Like some huge shadow 'mid the shadows there,
Unto the unwaked slumber of that plain ;
And moved amid the hushed and sombre dead,
Awful and stern in their last silent sleep,
With clotted blood congealed on shield and helm,

And stony faces staring at the stars,
Great blade or spear still clasped in each dead hand ;
And came to where the young boy-chieftain lay,
The last grim prince of his rude southern race,
With whom he rode to battle yester morn,
Now stark and motionless beneath the stars,
With his life's foeman, silent, face to face !

And Ahmet lifted up his sombre face
To the white heaven and the stars, his gods,
And moaned, ' O awful rulers of my race,
Looking from out the mighty deeps on me,
Ye who on radiant thrones of splendid light,
From out your far halls gaze upon this earth ;
And know, perchance, her motions through the deep,
Her changes and her seasons, and perchance
The strange, weird agony and joy of man,
Who rises from her breast as some dim mist,
Then sinks for ever on her meres again :
Know ye that unto me this night is given
The woeful part to answer for the dead
Unto you gods, who rule the afterworld.
My part it is to bury this great king,
The mighty son of a once mighty race.
Now 'tis for me to hollow his last bed,
And lay the holy earth upon his face,
His breast, and limbs, and shut him from the light,
So that ye gods, in looking from your thrones,
May see no part of what is shape of him,
And curse him, banished from your halls for ever.

' Yea, more ; in keeping with that ancient law,
Stern and relentless, given to my race,
And handed down the generations long,
And kept by us with solemn reverence,

I must this night find seven of our kin,
Who went out here upon this battle-field,
And lay their shapes of them with decent care,
Stark, side by side, in this young prince's grave,
Ere the white god of dawning pales yon east ;
Or else this prince, beloved, noble, brave,
Who hath gone out in his old foe's embrace,
Must ever, doomèd, wander the trackless way,
Shut out from all the homes of your white splendour
And searching for ever,—like some lonesome wind
Beating about the hollow halls of night.'

Then, wresting a blade from some grim foeman's hand,
Strode once more outward to the river's bank,
Where the great waters moved beneath the mist,
And never a night-bird called from bank to bank
But the cold-river mists encircled him.
And there he toiled with quick, despairing will,
And made an opening in the wind-swept sands,
Red, desert-blown, adown the centuries.
The solemn night-winds crept about his toil,
Loosening the mists along the lonesome shores.
And now a slinking jackal wandered past,
Then stole to some far shadow of the field
To his weird feast upon the unburied dead.

Then with stern face, across the lonely field,
Like some great hero of the olden days
Working by night some splendid titan deed,
Or, as the shadow of some olden god
Paying by night the last sad hallowed rites
Over the form of some great chieftain slain ;
With reverent duty to the spirit fled,
Bare he the dead young king with awful toil
Unto the grave that he had hallowed there,

With six men more, and laid them in that grave,
With faces fixed, limbs rigidly composed,
And mute, dull eyes, dumb, staring at the stars.
Then went again with agonising tread,
As a young lioness might hunt her cub
In some great slaughter of huge jungle beasts,
And circle dumb, yet never find him there ;
So he in vain, amid the silent dead,
Searching the heaps, went through the haunted dark,
Praying the gods in his great, dread despair.
Then, sorrowing back, came to the high-raised bank,
And saw the lonely river and the night,
The iron mountains, and those dead men there !

And now it seemed to Ahmet, standing by,
That out of the sombre shadow of that pit
Those silent faces pleaded with him there.
And well he knew that somewhere off afar
In outer space, this side Valhalla's gates,
These seven souls awaited heaven's doom.
With that a bitter sorrow filled his soul
For those his warrior-comrades lying dead,
And that young prince whom he had loved so well :
That they should never see Valhalla's doors
Wide-open to the welcome din within,
Of mighty warriors at eternal feasts,
And glorious songs of titan battle-joy
Of lofty heroes told unto the gods.
' Nor could I enter there myself,' he dreamed,
' And know their joy, if that I die not here.
And did I now wend backward to my home,
And live mine after-days in earthly peace,
And turn mine aged face upward by my hearth,
Surrounded by my loved, in days to come :
Could I, a warrior, to the Warrior-gods

Go in, nor answer for those dead ones there,
And meet their hero faces without shame,
And know these poor ones wandering in the dark,
Despairing ever through the endless years.'

Whereat he rose and looked up to the stars,
And spake : ' O Mighty Ones, it is well seen
That I must know mine olden home no more,
But I must end me here on this dread plain,
Loosening my soul, even that these poor men
May know the golden glory of the gods ;
Returning never to the ones I love.'
Whereat a great sob rent his anguished frame,
And all his face, across the shadowed light,
Showed with a bitter woe, for he was young,
Scarce yet a man, and this his first of battles,
Where he had come in his fierce warrior-joy,
For that glad love wherewith he loved the king.
And far at home his aged father sat,
And his old mother, mourning for their son ;
And in the dark he saw his betrothèd's eyes
Softened to tears at memory of his name.
Whereat deep anguish smote his strong young breast,
And looking to the sky, cried out : ' O Gods !
Is there no way ? A sign ! great Gods, a sign ! '
Whereat a splendid meteor blazed and fell
Across the silent wonder of the night,
Girding the horizon to the iron hills.
And then a thrill of greatness shook him there,
For now he knew for certain he must die.
And looking on the dead face of the prince,
He spake : ' O noble soul and brave and true !
Great heart that never fled from human face,
Nor yet would go back from some wondrous doom,
Such as is laid on thy loved comrade here !

That such dread woes are fallen from the gods,
'Tis not for souls like mine to question why.
But I will follow whitherso'er thou goest,
Thunder thy shadow-steed o'er trackless heaven,
Or to the brink of floorless night and hell.
Yet, comrade, friend, forgive thine Ahmet here,
If he finds woman's grief for what he leaves.
Like thee, I never more will see my home,
My boyhood's country in its golden prime :—
The happy hearths and plains we loved of yore.
No more must see the parents of my youth,
Nor guard their age, nor close their sightless eyes,
Nor know the joys of husband or of sire,
Of children's prattle, glad about the knees,
The loved home comforts, and the wintry fire,
And all the glories of this splendid world.
All these must I forego, nor know old age,
And the last peace at golden life's decline,
Because of some weird doom that hath been mine,
Given of old, from out the mighty gods.'
Then ceased, and, with soft hands of loving care,
Took earth and laid it on the dead young king :—
Upon his face and his still, rigid limbs ;
And said : ' I now commend thee to the gods.'
Likewise, in turn, he did unto the others,
As was the ancient custom of his race.
Then Ahmet rose and stood in his own grave,
And bearing in his hand the naked blade,
Spake : ' Now am I resolved with conquering hand
To cleave this murky curtain of my flesh,
And hew a doorway past these walls of life
Unto the outer splendour of the gods.
And ye, white watchers of the wheeling world,
O ancient makers of my doom, behold !
O lonesome desert, wintry to the south,

O luminous stream and desolate iron hills,
Your glory will fall on Ahmet's eye no more !
And thou, my love, whose holy love was mine,
Snatched by the fates from my too passionate grasp,
Thou wilt know sorrow when thine Ahmet's gone.
Yea, thou wilt sit across the wintry years,
Turning thy wheel by morn or sunset door,
Brooding upon a face that comes no more !
And ye, my parents ! One will hobbling go
Past the familiar haunts and quarrel with Death
Who claimed the wrong one first. The other, she,
Will croon, with grief-filled face, the fire beside,
Peopling in vain the home with olden dreams,
And all the joyous sounds that should have been.
Farewell, O glorious stars, and sun and moon,
Now I go out upon this journey dread,
I hear my charger, slain this early morn,
Neighing beyond the gates of outer dark,
Watching for the master who should come.
Then lifting up his strong face to the skies,
Took one last look on all the wheeling worlds,
And, with glad challenge to the foeman dark,
Struck home the thirsting blade to his proud heart,
And with one mighty shout there backward fell !

Then there was heard a thunder of shadowy hoofs
That out of the deep wells of the night swept past ;
And as they went a riderless steed there neighed
Joyously, to him who leaped to saddle,
With splendid mien of conqueror just returned
From some far titan battle of the gods ;
Then all swept up the steep, sheer depths of heaven,
Thundering up the glorious slopes of blue,
Striking fire-hoofs upon the flinty air,
Onward to the ramparts of the skies,

Where some day through long ages they will scale,
And clang the golden gates and enter in.

But still that ancient night went wheeling round,
Beyond the murk to meet the coming day ;
And over the iron mountains and the dark,
Out of the wintry radiance of the stars,
There grew a beauty of that lonely place,
That clothed those mighty dead, and came and fell,
Like on some peak that fronts the far-off dawn,
On Ahmet's face, a silent majesty.

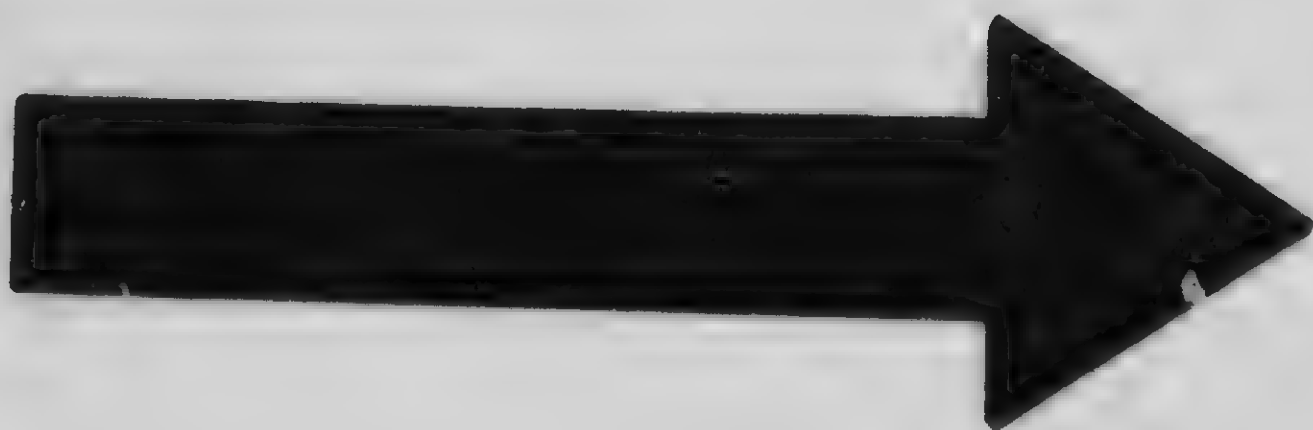
THE EARTH-SPIRIT

Down these golden uplands I
Move with sunny winds and sky,
Where the ghosts of waters are,
To the gates of dusk and star.

And I know that as I go,
She whose bosom is the snow
Of the birch and aspen tree,
Dreams these sunny dreams with me ;

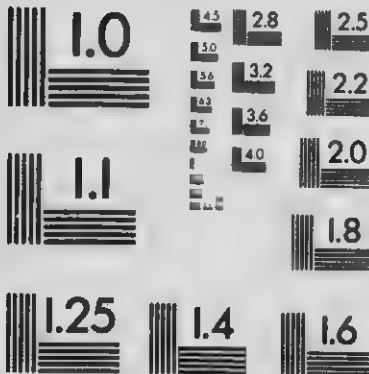
She whose glance and gleam of hair
Are the ruddy spinning rare
Of the gold glint of the sun
In the wood when day is done ;

She whose inner speech is heard
In the hush of wind and bird,
And whose soul is as a star
Cradled where the hill-lakes are.



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THE CALL OF THE OPEN

THE care
And the wear
Of the world may grind,
And the toil
And the moil
Of life may dree :
But the indolent mind
Of the vagabond wind
And its far-off shine
Of the world for me !

They may chain
Me in vain
To an irksome book,
In the dingy din
Of a toil-worm room :
But the sunbeam genie
Of meadow and brook,
Sings in my heart
Through the glimmer and gloom.

My body is here,
But my soul is there ;
Ye may not keep me
On such a day :
When over
The clover,
That mad wind-rover

THE CALL OF THE OPEN

71

Is chasing the shadow
And shine away.

They are my brothers
Who call
And call ;
And lilt
In the song
Of the wind
Till I go ;
With the gleam
And dream
Of the sunfleece wall,
Out to the sleeps
Of the deeps
That flow.

What care
To fare
'Mid the haunts of men ;
Wild are the thoughts
Of the wind-blown day ;
What reck's life
Of the street-strife,
When,
Fleet are the fancies
Of far away.

Out in the woodlands,
Leaping, ashine,
The brooks are brimming,
Their glad glens through :
And dim in a mist,
To the far skyline,
The hills,

THE CALL OF THE OPEN

To the verge
Of the world,
Are blue.

Fevered the voice
Of the street that calls :
With its care
And its wear,
And its old-world fret :
But out
In the house
Of the wind's
Wide walls,
No tears
In the eyes
Of the years
Are wet.

But the tune-
Less swoon
Of the day,
And a bird
That pipes
From a sunlit,
Dream-swayed
Tree :—
While the breast,
Dim-stirred,
Of a stream
Is heard,
Far,
From the jar
Of the world
Set free.

THE CHILDREN

Out of the vasts of the world,
From the beat of the alien drum,
Back from the wanderings far
Do the ancient children come.

Back from the isles of the East,
Back from the sunset wall :
Calling Mother, soul of our soul,
Do the ancient children call.

Back from the visions of toiling,
Out from the dreams of gold,
From the endless striving and yearning
The children return to the fold.

Back from the alien roads,
Of ignis fatuus gleam,
Back to the mother, back to the home,
Do the hearts of the children dream.

There is cry that the race is sinking,
Breed of the Albion isle,
That the strong arm sinks, that the sinew shrinks
And the lie and the cheat beguile ;

But we are your children, Mother,
We at your breasts have fed,
We will not leave you, life of our life,
Dead of our olden dead.

THE CHILDREN

Gather, as war-clouds gather,
Hordes of the world afar,
We are the deathless sons of the race,
Stars of the olden star.

Sons of the ancient sunrise,
Children of granite and dew :
We yet will drink of the dreams on your brink,
Hills of the heather blue.

Reckon thy dead, O Albion,
Reckon thy latest blood,
Sons of the strong, where the sunlight long
Floods the round world in its flood :

Reckon on us, O Albion,
Let the world's jackals but spring,
We will be yours while earth endures,
While earth and the earth-roots cling.

Strong is the flag, O Children,
Whereunder your breed are born,
Strong is the love of the dwelling-place,
And sweet is the homelight's morn :

But stronger far yet is the race-tie,
The kinships that kindle and bind,
And evermore true to the breed and the thew
Are the sons of the world-old kind.

Yea, back to the ancient mother
The earth-wide children yearn,
Who fared to achieve, to dream, to glean,
To wrestle, to build, to learn.

THE CHILDREN

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But as ashes the vast achievement,
And weary the hearts that pray,
When the old blood dreams and the old love
gleams
In the hearts of the Far-away.

Back 'mid the world's wide seething,
Its witch-pot brew that boils :
Back from the buying and selling of earth
From the chaos of battles and toils.

The hearts of the far-swept children
To the ancient mother turn.
When the day breaks, when the hour comes,
The world will waken and learn.

Not the one flag, not the two flags,
But the blood that wakens and stirs :
The world may claim them, the world may
name them,
But the hearts of the race are Hers.

TO THE OCTOBER MORNING

BRIGHT, pallid, changing, chill October morn ;
Across your windy, keen, exhilarant air
You loom, a cameo dream, a vision fair ;
Where through your purples and mauves of skeleton
trees—

Friezes of lingering foliage, russet browns,
And wine-like crimsons, flaming torches, gold,
Of maples, beeches, sumacs, poplars—shine
The horn-like, cloudy windows of the sky.

Nothing on earth more beautiful than this ;
To feel your glow, austere, of wintry flame,
Your exquisite Greek infinities of colour ;
And know that inward thrill, that titan vision
Once more Atlantean—the marbled bay,
Th' Olympian Mountain, Saturn's mighty Crown ;
And hear once more the Tritons sing, and know
Once more immortal Earth's old godlike dream.

HER LOOK

TIME may set his fingers there,
Fix the smiles that curve about
Her winsome mouth, and touch her hair,
Put the curves of youth to rout ;
But the ' something ' God put there,
That which drew me to her first,
Not the imps of pain and care,
Not all sorrow's fiends accurst,
Can kill the look that God put there.

Something beautiful and rare
Nothing common can destroy ;
Not all the leaden load of care,
Not all the dross of earth's alloy ;
Better than all fame or gold,
True as only God's own truth,
It is something all hearts hold
Who have loved once in their youth.

That sweet look her face doth hold
Thus will ever be to me ;
Joy may all her pinions fold,
Care may come, and misery ;
Through the days of murk and shine,
Though the roads be foul or fair,
I will see through love's glad eyne
That sweet look that God put there.

WIND

I AM Wind, the deathless dreamer
Of the summer world ;
Tranced in snows of shade and shimmer,
On a cloud-scarp curled :

Fluting through the argent shadow
And the molten shine
Of the golden, lonesome summer
And its dreams divine.

All unseen I walk the meadows,
Or I wake the wheat,
Speeding o'er the tawny billows
With my phantom feet.

All the world's face, hushed and sober,
Wrinkles where I run ;
Turning sunshine into shadow,
Shadow into sun.

Stirring soft the breast of waters
With my winnowing wings,
Waking the grey ancient wood
From hushed imaginings.

Where the blossoms drowse in languors,
Or a vagrant sips,
Lifting nodding blade or petal
To my cooling lips ;

WIND

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Far from gloom of shadowed mountain,
Surge of sounding sea,
Bud and blossom, leaf and tendril,
All are glad of me.

Loosed in sunny deeps of heaven
Like a dream I go,
Guiding light my genie-driven
Flocks, in herds of snow ;—

Ere I moor them o'er the thirsting
Woods and fields beneath,
Dumbly yearning, from their burning
Dream of parchèd death.

Not a sorrow do I borrow
From the golden day ;
Not a shadow holds the meadow
Where my footsteps stray ;

Light and cool, my kiss is welcome
Under sun and moon,
To the weary vagrant wending
Under parchèd noon ;

To the languid, nodding blossom
In its moonlit dell,
All earth's children, sad and yearning,
Know and love me well.

Without passion, without sorrow,
Driven in my dream
Through the season's trance of sleeping
Cloud and field and stream ;

WIND

Haunting woodlands, lakes, and forests,
Seas and clouds impearled,
I am Wind, the deathless dreamer
Of the summer world.

SHELLEY

SPIRIT of fire and snow and heart all dew,
 Child of the midnight's glory and the stars,
 Whose mad, sweet chanting smote to heaven's bars:—
 Brother ethereal to that glorious few
 Who from earth's beauty song's high triumphs drew;—
 Beyond the earthy, like some paler Mars,
 Winging above thine age's petty jars,
 Thy song to heaven meteor-like out-flew.

First came one great in love's majestic calm,
 The wizard singer of all singing men;
 Then he who sang in high immortal psalm
 That greatest of all love's great, sad rebels. Then
 Thou camest, angel of the starry lyre!
 Raining the dusk with melody of fire.

LIFE'S OCEAN

LIFE is a continent huge, and love its ocean
 That folds it round with gleams of joy and sorrow;
 Peopling its arid wastes with splendid moods
 Of sun and dew, and mantle soft of night,
 And large-mooned waters; giving beauty to sight
 And music to hearing; wealth to poverty;
 And splendid memory unto age and death.
 Without the one the other shrivels up
 Like some dead planet, through eternal wastes,
 Sunless, joyless, alienate from God.

THE FLIGHT

He came riding up to the gates by night.

Ride swift !

An hundred horsemen to left and to right ;

Ride swift !

An hundred torches did glimmer and quiver,
And she leaped to his arms as the brook to the river ;

Ride swift !

He hath borne her away from castle and bower,

Ride long !

Thunder they under the dark night hour ;

Ride long !

Thunder they on her kinsmen to meet ;

And horror and death in the blackness and sleet ;

Ride long !

Two phantom riders have hurled to the sea ;

Ride still !

Who cast no shade to the moon as they flee ;

Ride still !

And they ride for ever by glimmer and foam,

With the moon and the blackness guiding them home ;

Ride still !

A man and a maiden lie under the night,

Ride slow !

And the moon on their faces is chilled and white ;

Ride slow !

For love hath stolen from turret and tower,

And woe is the dreaming and woe is the hour !

Ride slow !

TO THE SPIRIT OF HENDRICK HUDSON 83

TO THE SPIRIT OF HENDRICK HUDSON

CONCERNING THE JOURNEY OF EARL GREY
THROUGH HUDSON BAY, A.D. 1910

COLDLY in splendour descends
The Arctic evening. The waste
Of desolate waters, thy sea
Washes its isolate shores ;
And on its far reaches a sail,
Lonely, outcast, and forlorn—
Like solitary bird, with wing
Wounded and broken and spent,
Seeking in vain its nest
On some dim, oceanward crag—
Glimmers a space, and is gone.

But thou wert not outcast,
Great soul of the seafaring blood,
Thou pioneer pilot of dreams,
Thou finder of oceans remote
In the ultimate Empires of man.
Hendrick Hudson, 'tis here
That thou hast graven thy name,
To be a word of great need
In the thoughts of men for all time,
Not in thy mighty stream,
Splendid and vast, of the south,
Where, 'twixt its mountainward walls,
It surges beneficent tides,
Triumphant and glad, to the main :

84 TO THE SPIRIT OF HENDRICK HUDSON

But here, in thy northern wastes
Of the short red summers of joy
And the long dark winters of dream,
Is the gulf of thy world-fame to be,
Great Englishman ! outfaring soul
Immortal ! with that high band,
Bold Raleigh and Franklin and Drake,
Thy brother pilots, where surge
Heaves on the crimson edge
Of Ocean's ultimate rim,
O'er horizons of vastness and morn.

Here, where thou criedst Sail on !
Sail on ! sail on ! till we come
To the long-lost passage ; that path
From Europe to furthestmost Ind :—
That road once open, when man,
In that rare golden age of the past,
Did compass all earth in a span
Of godlike effort and dream.

This road which thine innermost soul
Knew well earth's seeker must find—
As find it he shall some day ;
And prove that high courage, that faith
Which led thee onward, great soul !
Out on thy last dread voyage ;—
But left thee forsaken, forlorn,
Betrayed and lost, but not quelled,
Only thy trust in God left,
On those drifts of thy desolate main—
This unknown gulf of thy North,
Where in days of a future unborn,
In splendid results of thy deed,
Thou wilt find thee, and triumph again.

TO THE SPIRIT OF HENDRICK HUDSON 85

For in this dim, distant day
Of a duller, less venturesome age,
In this dawn of the century to come,
Another great Englishman, strong,
Like thee, in courage and faith
And effort godlike, to achieve
Some good for the weal of the race,
Hath dared thy grim, desolate sea,
And found it a highway benign,
A gateway of commerce to bind
Imperial ties in its gleam.

Here in this song rude-forged,
But sincere in its burden and theme,
I couple his name with thine,
Thou famed seafarer ! he, first
Great viceroy of Britain to reap
Splendid achievement from that
Sad, tragic end of thy dream.

Thou, going out in defeat,
Seeming, not real ; marooned,
Adrift in a shallop, to find
Those far-sought coasts of thy vision
But fabled mirage of the mind ;—
He, in a spirit like thine,
Venturing perilous seas,
Voyaging desolate vasts,
Scorning all danger and dread,
Daring thy treacherous shoals
And lonely ice mountains, to prove
A North-east Passage-way home.

He, like thee intrepid,
Dauntless, guided by one

86 TO THE SPIRIT OF HENDRICK HUDSON

Great thought, great hope, and desire
To serve his Empire and race ;—
Strong in one high resolve
To conquer, to prove, to achieve,
And throttle all failure and doubt ;
Counting all else but as naught,
Save that the truth should prevail
In the destiny great of his race,
And the making of God's way man's.

THE ELF-LOVER

It was a haunted youth ; he spake
Beneath the beechen shade :
' An' hast thou seen my love go past,
A sunny, winsome maid ?

' An' hast thou seen my love fare past,
Her face with life aflame ?
The leaves astir her footsteps tell,
The soft winds blow her name.

' 'Twas when the autumn days were still—
It seemeth but an hour—
I met her on the gold hillside
When elfin loves had power.

' Her voice was like the sound of brooks,
Her face like some wild bloom ;
And in the beauty of her look
I read mine ancient doom.

' And when the world in mist died out
Down toward some evening land,
Betwixt the glinting golden rod
We two went hand in hand.

' And when the moon, a golden disk,
Above the night hills came,
Down in a world of midnight haze
I kissed her lips aflame.

THE ELF-LOVER

' But when the moon was hidden low
Behind each spectre tree,
She loosed from my sad arms and bent
A startled look on me.

' (While wound from out some haunted dusk
A far-off elfin horn),
Like one on sudden woke from sleep,
And fled into the morn.

' I follow her, I follow her,
But nevermore may see—
The crimson dawn, the stars of night
Know what she is to me.

' I ne'er can rest, I ne'er can stay,
But speed from place to place ;
For all my heart is flamed with that
Wild glamour of her face.

' I know her soft arms in my dreams,
All wound about my sleep ;
I seem to hear her silvern voice
In all the winds that creep.

' O saw you not her come this way,
By boughs in waters glassed ?
So slight her form, so soft her step
You 'd think a moon-ray passed.

' O tell me, did you see her wend ?
And whence, to hill or sea ?
The ruddy dawn, the stars of night
Know what she is to me.'

THE SINGER

LIFE is too bitter,
Strife too strong ;
Lackaday ! lackaday !
Dead is poor Song.

There in the mart
Of the thronging, teeming ;
Dead in the dust,
His gold locks gleaming.

Killed in the fray,
With his glad heart broken ;
Never a sigh for him,
Never a token

That the ill world cared ;
While with clamour and wrong
She lifts the brute victors
Of Mammon along.

Dead in the dust,
With never a care for him ;
Save some day the green wreath
That the world's heart will wear for him.

When there 'mid her hours
That are truest and latest,
She recalls, with dumb grieving,
The voice of her greatest.

PAN THE FALLEN

He wandered into the market
With pipes and goatish hoof ;
He wandered in a grotesque shape,
And no one stood aloof.
For the children crowded round him,
The wives and greybeards too,
To crack their jokes and have their mirth,
And see what Pan would do.

The Pan he was they knew him,
Part man but mostly beast,
Who drank, and lied, and snatched what bones
Men threw him from their feast ;
Who seemed in sin so merry,
So careless in his woe,
That men despised, scarce pitied him,
And still would have it so.

He swelled his pipes and thrilled them,
And drew the silent tear ;
He made the gravest clack with mirth
By his sardonic leer.
He blew his pipes full sweetly
At their amused demands,
And caught the scornful, earth-flung pence
That fell from careless hands.

PAN THE FAILEN

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He saw the mob's derision,
And took it kindly too,
And when an epithet was flung,
A coarser back he threw ;
But under all the masking
Of a brute, unseemly part,
I looked, and saw a wounded soul,
And a godlike, breaking heart.

And back of the elfin music,
The burlesque, clownish play,
I knew a wail that the weird pipes made,
A look that was far away—
A gaze into some far heaven
Whence a soul had fallen down ;
But the mob only saw the grotesque beast
And the antics of the clown.

For scant-flung pence he paid them
With mirth and elfin play,
Till, tired for a time of his antics queer,
They passed and went their way ;
Then there in the empty market
He ate his scanty crust,
And, tired face turned to heaven, down
He laid him in the dust.

And over his wild, strange features
A softer light there fell,
And on his worn, earth-driven heart
A peace ineffable.
And the moon rose over the market,
But Pan the beast was dead ;
While Pan the god lay silent there,
With his strange, distorted head.

PAN THE FALLEN

And the people, when they found him,
Stood still with awesome fear :
No more they saw the beast's rude hoof,
The furtive, clownish leer.
But the lightest spirit in that throng
Went silent from the place,
For they knew the look of a god released
That shone from his dead face.

PHAETHON

I, PHAETHON, dwelling in that golden house
Which Hephaistos did build for my great sire,
O'd Helios, king of glowing heaven and day,
Knowing this life but mortal in its span,
Hedged in by puling youth and palsied age,
Where poor men crawl like insects, knowing pain
And mighty sorrow to the gates of death,
Besought the god my father by his love
To grant me that which I did long for most
Of all things great in earth and heaven and sea,
The which he granting in his mighty love,—
Of all things splendid under the splendid sky
Built of old by toil of ancient gods,
To me the dearest : for one round golden day
To stand in his great chariot built of fire,
And chase the rosy hours from dawn to dusk,
Guiding his fleeting steeds o'er heaven's floors.
He gave to me.—No god yet brake his word.
Speaking to me in sorrow : ' O my son,
Know what my foolish pride hath made for thee.
That mortal life which is to men a span,
From childhood unto youth, and manhood's prime,
Reaching on out to happy olden age,
For thee must shrink into one woeful day.
For, O my son, impetuous in thy pride,
Who would be as the gods and ape their ways,
And sacrilegious leave thy mortal bounds,—
Know thou must die upon that baleful day,

That terrible day of days thou mountest up
To ride that chariot never mortal rode,
And drive those steeds that never man hath driven.
Then I : ' My father, know me, thine own son.
Better to me to live one day a god,
Going out in some great flame of death,
Than live this weary life of common men,
Misunderstood, misunderstanding still,
Half wakeful, moving dimly in a dream,
Confused, phantasmic, miscalled history ;
Chasing the circles of the perishing suns,
The summers and dim winters, hating all,
Heart-eaten for a longing ne'er attained,
Despising all things named of earth or heaven,
Or mortal birth that they should ever be ;
Knowing within this mystery of my being,
This curbed heredity, lies a latent dream
Of some old vanished, banished, lease of being,
When life was life and man's soul lived its hour,
Uncurbed, uncabined, like the mighty gods,
Vast, splendid, capable, and heraclean,
To drain the golden beaker of his days.'
Thus I : ' My father, I am over weary,
Chained in this summer-plot of circumstance,
Beaten by fearful custom, childish, chidden,
Hounded of cruel wolves of superstition,
And rounded by a petty wall of time,
Plodding the dreary years that wend their round,
Aping the sleeping, sensual life of beasts,
Fearful of all things, dreading mostly death,
Past pain and age and all their miseries end,
Where all must rot, who smile and weep and sleep,
And be a part of all this grim corruption.
Nay, better to me than the long-measured draught,
Trickling out through many anxious years,

Iron-eaten, haggard, to the place of death—
To drain my flagon of life in one glad draught,—
To live, to love, aspire, and dare all things ;
Be all I am and others ought to be,
Real man or demi-god, to blossom my rose,
To scale my heights, to live my vastest dream,
To climb, to be, and then, if chance my fate,
To greatly fall.'

Then my great father, laden
With woe divine: ' My son, take thou thy way ;
As thou hast chosen, thus 'twill be to thee ' ;
And passing, darkened down his godlike face
And shadowed splendour thence for evermore.

'Twas night an' prosal down the orient meads,
With stars like winking pearls, far-studding heaven,
And dews all-glorious on the bending stem,
Odorous, passionate as the rose of sleep
Half-budded on the throbbing heart of night ;
And in the east a glowing sapphire gloomed,
When I awoke and lifted up mine eyes,
And saw through rose and gold and vermeil dyes,
And splendid mists of azure hung with pearl,
Half-hid, half-seen, as life would apprehend,
As in a sleep, the presence of dim death
And fate and terrible gods, the car of day.

Like morn within the morning glad it hung,
Light hid in light, swift blinding all who saw,
Dazzled, its presence ; motionless though vibrate,
Where it did swing athwart the deep-welled night,
The heart of morning in the folds of dark,
Pulsating sleep, and conquering death with life ;
So glowed its glory, folded cloud in cloud,
Gold within azure, purple shut in gold,

The bud of morning pulsing ere it break
And spill its splendours many vermeil-dyed,
Reddening Ocean to his outmost rim.

Here charmed dreams and drowsèd magic hung,
And wingèd hopes and rosy joys afloat
Filled all the air, and I was short aware
That this was life, and this mine hour supreme,
To seize and act and be one with the gods.
So dreamed I, reckless when to think, to act,
And moved elate, with quick life-flaming step,
Athwart the meadow's budding asphodels,
Song on my lip and life at heart and eye,
Exultant, breathing flame of pride and power.
Joy rose and sang, a bird, across the fields,
Hope's rosy wings shot trembling to the blue,
And courage with dauntless steps before me went,
Brushing the veils of fierce cobwebby fires.
And there, before me, sprawled grim ancient power,
A hideous Ethiop, huge in sodden sleep,
The golder reins clutched in his titan hands.
I snatched, leaped, shouted ; morning rose in flame,
And ashweed paled to lily, lily blushed
To ruddy crocus, crocus flamed to rose,
And out of all, borne on the floors of light
I floated, gloried, up the orient walls,
And all things woke and sang of conquering day.

Higher yet higher, out of fiery mists,
Filling those meadows of the dew-built dawn,
Gloried and glorying, power clutched in my hand,
Wreathed about in terrible splendours, I drave,
Glowing, the dawn's gold coursers champng steam
Of snow and pearly foam from golden bridles
Forged in blue eidolon forges of the night,

Beaten on steely anvils of the stars.
 These, champing, reared their fetlocks; breathing
 flame,
 In red, dew-draining lances, thundered on,
 'Whelming night, as golden stair by stair
 They climbed the glimmering bridgeway of the day.

Far under, wreathed in mists, old ocean swayed;
 And, cyclops-like, the bearded mountains hung.
 Vast shining rivers with their brimming floors
 And broad curved courses gleamed and glanced and
 shone,
 And loneliness and gloom and grey despair
 With sombre hauntings fled to shuddering night,
 Hidden in caves and coral glooms of seas.
 Low down the east the morn's ambrosial meads
 Sank in soft splendours. Sphering out below,
 Gilded in morning, anchored the patient earth,
 Mountain and valley, ocean and wide plain,
 Opening to dawn's young footsteps where we wheeled,
 And blossomed wide the rosebud of the day.
 Glory was mine, but greater, sense of power,
 Nor marred by fear, as loftier we climbed,
 With glinting hoofs that clanged the azure bridge
 That arched from dawning up to flaming noon.
 Dauntless my soul, and fiery-glad my heart,
 And 'vastness,' 'vastness,' sang through all my being,
 As gloved with adamant I guided on
 The day's red coursers up their flaming hill,
 To reach the mighty keystone of the day.

All things conspired to build my upward road:
 The fitful winds of morning, the soft clouds
 That fleece-like swept my cheek, the azure glint
 Of ocean swaying, restless, on his rim,

Where slept the continents like a serpent curled
In sleep, leviathan, huge, about the world.

Then sudden all my waking turned to dream,
A madness wherein hideous all things hung.
Thought fled confused, and awful apprehension
Shadowed my spirit, power and reason fled ;
And, maddening, day's red coursers thundered on,
Uncurbed, unguided by my palsied hand,
Then with loud ruin, blundering from the bridge,
Through space went swaying, now high up, now down,
Scattering conflagration and fierce death
O'er earth's shrunk verges where their scorchings
scarred.

Time fled in terror, forests shrivelled up,
Ocean drew back in shudderings to his caves,
Huge mountains shook and rumbled to their base,
Great streams dried up, old cities smoked and fell,
And all life met confusion and despair
And dread annihilation.

Then the gods,
Pitying wrecked nature, in their sudden vengeance,
Me, impious, hurled from out my dizzying height.
Time vanished, reason swooned, then left her throne,
And darkness wrapt me as I shuddering fell,
Oblivion-clouded, to the plunging seas.
Ocean received me, folding in his deeps,
Cooling and emerald. Here in coral dreams
I rest and cure me, never wholly waking,
Filled with one splendour, fumbling in a dream,
As waves do fumble all about a cave,
For one clear memory of that one high day.

I failed, was mortal ; where I climbed I fell.
But all else little matters ; life was mine,

PHAETHON

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I dreamed, I dared, I grappled with, I fell ;
And here I live it over in my dreams.
All things may pass, decline, and come to naught,
Death 'whelm life as day engulfed in dark ;
But I have greatly lived, have greatly dared,
And death will never wholly wrap me round
And black me in its terrors. I am made
One with the future, dwelling in the dreams
And memories dread of envious gods and men.

DAWN

THOU god of all the golden-footed hours !
Dwelling 'twixt the dewy night and day :
Hidden deep in rosy budding bowers,
Where the young winds from yesternight astray
Wander, and faint and waver, and sweetly lose their
way.

O happy ! happy ! never to know the heat,
The toil and sweat and groan of burning noon ;
The fever and the ache ; the wearied feet
Of those who moan beneath the sun and moon,
Sad children of this earth and all its bitter boon.

O happy ! happy ! never canst thou know
The sorrow and the sad despairs of age,
The cares of life, the madness, and the slow,
Iron-eating thoughts, the bitter wars that wage,
The storm and stress and woe of all who faint and
rage.

O happy ! happy ! hid from all that pains ;—
For thee this earth is ever one glad hour
Of loveliness, where Youth for ever reigns,
Where Beauty, for ever waking from her bower,
Blossoms her azure hopes in flood and sky and
flower.

DAWN

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Never to know the weariness of night,
The loneliness of eve and all its woes,
The shrouding dark, the pallor, the fading light ;—
About thy realm a golden glory glows,
Hedging for ever thy halls with heaven's rosy snows.

THE TRAGEDY OF MAN

LONG, long ago ;
Ere these material days ;
Ere man learned o'er much for the golden glow
Of Love's divine amaze ;
Ere faith was slain ; there came to this sad earth
A high, immortal being of source divine,
And, mingling with the upward climbing life,
Like crystal water in some fevered wine,
Wakened in one red blood mysterious strife,
Knowledge of good and ill, and that sad birth
Of splendour and woe for all who yearn and pine.

And this is why,
Down in the craving, remorseful human heart
There doth remain a dream that will not die,
An unassuaged hunger, that o'er the smart
Of sorrow and shame and travail clamours eterne
For some high goal, some vision of being superne,
Life doth not grant, earth doth not satisfy.

This is the secret of the heart of man
And his sad tragedy ; his godlike powers ;
His summer of vastness, and the wintry ban
Of all his greatness high which deity dowers,
Sunk to the yearnings of goat-footed Pan ;
Hinted of Shakespeare and that mighty clan

Of earth's high prophets, who in their brief day,
Holding the glory of the god in them,
Though chained to cravings of the lesser clay,
Dreamed earth's high dreams and wore love's
diadem.

Yea, 'this is why,
Through all earth's travail and joy, her seasons brief,
Through all her beauty and genius that will not die,
Surges a mighty grief,
Mingling with our heart's best piety ;—
A sadness dread, divine,
Lifting us beyond the pagan wine
And dance of life,
The satyr clamour and strife,
Unto a dream of being, a yearning flame
Of that heredity whence our sorrowings came.

SANCTUARY

ALL the long years I have wandered wide,
But now I am going home ;
Far from the restless, seething tide,
From the fever of hearts that roam ;
Far from the streets of oppression and pride,
From the helot hate and hire,
To the sunset lands of eventide,
The home of the heart's desire.

There in the great lake country,
Walled in from the world's mad dreams ;
Its envies, its joy that seems ;
Its loves, its hates, and its tears ;
To lie and sleep where the sun drinks deep,
Through the golden slumber of years.

You had my heart from the first ;
And there would I lie at the last.
When the fever and fret that cursed,
And the long heartache had passed ;
To sleep through the long, long sleep,
When the eye may see no more ;
At home and one with wind and sun,
In your glory of haze and shore.

THE VIOLIN

YEA, take all else, my life, or what you will,
But leave me this. What is it unto you ?
A few thin shrivelled bits of carven wood,
Time-stained and polished, curved to curious form,
With strings to scrape on that a man might buy
For a few farthings. You say 'tis a Cremona ?
'Tis naught to you or others, but to me
My joy, my life ! Once more my hand grows strong
To clasp its curves and feel its soul vibrate
Throughout my being ; for, believe me true,
It is mine other self. Yea, sit and hearken,
And I will make it speak, yea, sing and sob,
And weep and laugh and throb its strings along
The gamut of the passions of this life.
For here dwell melodies that Mozart played,
When he would call the angels of heaven down
Along the golden ladders of his dreams.
Here sleep those notes vibrate wherewith Beethoven
Did open up those tragic wells of music
And loose the prisoned ministers of sound ;
Wedding them to harmonies such as never
Before or after, save God or angel, heard.
Here pulse those magic dances that throb through
The sensate universe, keeping it in tune,
Warming the sunlight, blueing the azure of heaven,
Swaying the tides to harmonies of the moon :—
That stir those demon revellers of the deep,

And charm the rages of those ruined souls
'Mid horrified wakings of their eternal sleep.
Hark now the tender melodies of this song.
It is a charm-song stolen from fairyland,
Filled brim with spiced melodies of sleep.

Now 'tis the rest of night, the breathing woods,
The dewy hush of dawn, the peace of even,
Or slumber of noonday, 'tis an infant's breath;
Till higher, shriller, it strikes the notes of woe,
The harsh, discordant clangour of human strife :—
Then louder, stronger, to the strident note,
The echoing, vibrant clarion horn,
Or brazen trumpets, with their blatant throats,
Bugling along the battlements of the world.—
Ah, God ! it breaks in discord,—I have done.

I am degraded, old, I go in rags ;—
The children cry at me along the streets ;
Your lords and ladies shudder and scorn me by ;
Your glittering palaces are barred against me ;
Your power and splendour alien to my life :—
But what is wealth to him who holds my riches,
What splendour to the splendours that I draw
From out this shrivelled universe of sound ?

'Tis nothing but a bit of withered wood,
Cunningly built, and welded into shape,
With some few strings a groat or so might buy.—
But when I die I will beg them place it near me,
Within my coffin, close here to my heart ;
That through the long, lone autumn night of death,
My spirit may vibrate to its living strings,
Immortal with the chords that Mozart struck,
That Paganini played, Beethoven rang.

THE VIOLIN

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And when I wake, if ever there be waking,
Beyond that awful sleep that follows life,
My soul will wing to heaven on its strings,—
For did I know, how could I plead with God
Without its melodies to voice my love,
And heaven no heaven without my violin.

THE SOUL'S BATH

At even, when the roseate deeps
Of daylight dim from heaven's bars,
The soul her earth-worn garment slips,
And naked stands beneath the stars ;

And there unto that river vast,
That mighty tide of night whose girth,
With splendid planets, brimming past,
Doth wash the ancient rim of earth,

She comes and plunges in ; and laves
Her weariness in that vast tide,
That life-renewing deep, whose waves
Are wide as night is wide.

Then from the pure translucent flow
Of that unplumbed, invigorate sea,
Godlike in truth's white spirit-glow
She stands unshamed and free.

THE HOME OF SONG

HERE in northern solitudes,
Sounding shorelands, glooming woods,

Where the pines their dreams rehearse,
Is the home of haunting verse.

Dreams of beauty here inspire
All the summer's radiant fire

In the gleam of leaf and bird,
Ere the autumn's voice is heard

Fluting soft her woodland tune
Down the golden afternoon.

Where the seaward ships go down,
Lying some ancient Norman town ;

Where the northern marshes lie,
Golden under azure sky ;

Where the northern woodland glooms,
Luminous in leafy rooms,

With its ancient, sunlit wine,
Under smoke of dusky pine :

THE HOME OF SONG

Here the soul of silence broods
Under haunted solitudes ;

Here that spirit rare and pure,
Of the muses who endure,

Dreams with Wisdom's quiet eye,
While the phantom years go by.

Where far sunlands shine and drowse,
And great leafy, golden boughs,

Swaying, pendulous, within
A sleep diaphanous and thin,

Answer to the drowsy mind
And loiterings of the thoughtful wind :

Here in seasons lone and long
The spirit rare of northern song

Keeps in dreams remote, apart,
The cadences of her own heart.

ODE TO THE LAURENTIAN HILLS III

ODE TO THE LAURENTIAN HILLS

BLUE hills, elusive, far, and dim,
You lift so high beyond our care ;
Where earth's horizon seems to swim,
You dream in loftier air.

Here where our world wends day by day
Its sad, material round,
We know not of that purer ray
By which your heights are bound.

Ignoble thoughts, ignoble aims
Shut us from that high heaven ;—
Those dawning dreams, those sunset flames,
With which your peaks are riven.

You seem so lone and bleak, so vast
Beneath your dome of sky,
So patient to the heat or blast
That smites or hurtles by ;

So vague, withdrawn in mists remote,
Shut out in glories wide ;
The very fleecy clouds that float,
Your dreamings seem to hide.

We in our plots of circumstance
Are prisoners of a grim despair,
While your far shining shoulders glance
From heights where all things dare.

112 ODE TO THE LAURENTIAN HILLS

Could we from out this cloak of glooms
That prisons and oppresses,
But reach those large, sky-bounded rooms
Of your divine recesses ;

Then might we find that godlike calm,
That peace that holdeth you,
That soars like wordless prayer or psalm
To heaven with your blue.

Then might we know that silent power,
That patience, that supreme
Indifference to day and hour
Of your eternal dream.

Then might we lose, in fire and dew
Of your pellucid airs,
This diffidence to dare and do,
That grovels and despairs,

And dream once more that high desire,
That greatness dead and gone,
When earth's winged eagles eyed the fire
Your sunrise peaks upon :

That power serene, life's vasts to scan,
Beyond earth's futile tears ;
Her hopes, her curse, the bliss, the ban
Of all her anguished years.

THE WIND OF SLEEP

Out of the dusk it blows—
The soft, soft wind of sleep :
Out of those lands of rose,
From the ocean's petalled deep :
From the verges of old repose ;—
The soft, soft wind of sleep.

Out of the portals of dusk
Its wings of slumber have flown,
Subtle, of amber and musk,
Its breathings are Tyrian blown.

And the heart of the world's great deeds,
The passion, the love's glad chime,
Are washed as blossoms and weeds
On the Lethean stream of time.

And the red desire of the dawn,
The poignant heartache of care,
Like the daylight, are vanished and gone
Where the weary and sorrowful fare.

Out through those portals of horn,
Out through the ivory gate,
Where the dream and desire are re-born,
And the dead of the old world wait.

THE POET'S PART

In the world's great round of sorrow
Deeper is the poet's part
Than the petty day or morrow
In the mighty throbbing heart.
Let them struggle, let them rave,
His is more than foam of wave,
Be it life, or be it death,
Flame of sun or wintry breath.

In his course of doing, dreaming,
Holds his vision all alone,
'Mid the real and the seeming,
Of the laughter and the moan.
And for comfort, in his round,
He hath secret kinship found,
Sad to lose, but sweet to find,
In bud and leaf, in wave and wind.

See, the fevered world, rude-hearted,
Eager in the envious chase :
Soul that hoped, or soul that smarted,
Helot-driven in the race.
And that spectre they pursue,
Demon swifter than all hue,
Cry they loud by hill and lake,
Love nor hate can overtake.

Horse and hound of good or evil,
Beaten, leashed, by furious hand,
Driven by some urgent devil,
Leagues they sweep, by sea and land.
Ever alluring, ever lost,
Sweeps that evanescent ghost
Of their longing round the rim
Of the ages cursed of him.

Better fate the poet's gladness
Than to join that wild halloo,
In that hunt of demon madness
Where the hounds of life pursue.
Rather his to dwell apart
In the calm of mind and heart,
Where sad music hath no longing
For life's surge of wrath and wronging.

In that vortex where all wallow,
Hall and hovel, hut or court,
Beauty hath no heart to follow
Where the brute world maketh sport.
He of simpler heart and mind,
Rather dreams adown the wind,
Sun in eye and wind on lip,
Gives him heart's companionship.

From this place of inward vision,
Keeps his spirit true and whole :
Through the mists of indecision,
Firm commander of his soul :
'Mid life's wrecks of hopes and fears,
Master of his days and years.

COMMEMORATION ODE

(CAMBRIDGE, JUNE 1905)

BROTHERS in action, aspiration, aim,
Co-heritors of that old breed, old blood,
That ancient speech, that ancient faith and song ;—
Once more we stand in these memorial halls
And meet in kind communion, as of yore,
Those sun-filled hours of youth's Hyperion morn,
When life's great future blinded eager eyes,
And ways of vague achievement lay before,
With golden roadways leading on to fame
Or other portals of Hope's azure vision
Beyond the mists of aspiration's dream.

Once more we meet here with our tithe of lore,
Or dearly earned experience of this world,
And all its mystery of blinded ways ;—
And here we face the future ; nearer now
That last dread culmination of our days,
That solemn gate of earth's departing scene,
Where love and patience lay their burdens down,
Here at life's midday milestone do we stand,
Knowing our vision greater than our act,
Our possibility vaster than our dream.

Greater than all earth's woven creeds is that
Eternal possibility of man
To rise to nobler futures, loftier peaks
Of golden sunrise visions, climbing on
To those vast vistas of the ideal man.

COMMEMORATION ODE

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Learning is nature's kindred spirit. She
Holds up the torch to reason, seeking ever
That holy, immortal, changeless face of Truth.
Language may falter, palter, lose her old
Plain utterance, simple, pure, and undefiled ;—
But upward still is upward, straight is straight,
And narrow the way and hard the paths to God.

Not all the weight of vast material power,
The brazen frown, the iron hand of wealth,
Can make the ill less evil ; or the good
A part of evil. Still midway will stand
That sword of Eden flaming in between,
Whence man came naked, naked will return,
Clothed only in the truth of heart and brain.

There is no complex where the spirit rules.
The truth is simple as the perfect curve
Of elemental beauty ; life no lie,
Till man did build a fence to shut out God,
And hide with hideous tapestries the stars.
Those endless, gobelin questionings shut in
Man's soul from the eternal. Out beyond,
Where night and vasts anticipate the dawn,
No muffled doubt goes groping, where those hosts
Immortal, radiant, wheel their mystic fires—
Orion and the ancient Pleiades.

Think not because we lose the road that we
Are lost eternal. Still the road shines on
Through murky mists of this grim modern dream,
These smokes material shrouding His vast plan.
And still a child face teaches beauty's truth ;
A wayside blossom still remains a flower ;
And love, and hate of evil rule the world.

This shining roadway holds no cul-de-sac,
Though close the gorges seem to hem us in,
With human finality, reason's narrow bounds,
Within these hopeless mountains of the mind.

And often 'mid the anguish and turmoil
Of all this fevered being, I have felt
A sudden flame of some large knowledge flashed,
And then withdrawn from out my spirit's ken ;
As though God opened His vast doors of light
And outward being. Then my soul hath felt
Some mystic glimpse of far infinity,
As though there flamed a world outside our world,
Beyond this prison-house of all our tears,
This finite cell that we inhabit here.

And in that sudden light it seemed as if
This house of sadness, these grim narrow streets,
This blinded search from shrivelled day to day,
And all that past which memory intervenes,
This hourly round of earth's experience,
This opening up of vistas of life's days
And months and years, had all been lived before,
And this grim present but old dreams re-dreamed.

So moves life's mystery, as though fold in fold,
Of sense 'neath sense, like sleep which mantles dream,
Man's gross heredity muffles in his soul
From somewhat larger, mightier, some far vast,
As mists material curtain out God's stars.

For life is greater than its mightiest deeds,
And we, than this environment, wherein we dwell,
This mansion vast of failure, where the winds
Of youth's far longings haunt these banquet-halls

COMMEMORATION ODE

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Of deeds unfinished, broken pillars of faith,
And ruined stairways leading to the stars.

This, Brothers, is my message : Let us keep
The olden faith in glad sincerity,
Remembering ever, simplicity is the truth ;
Religion reverence ; wisdom but to keep
Those dread eternal laws which guide the world :

Forgetting not our duty to the race
From which our sires and our great-grandsires
sprang ;

That mighty stock, that iron heredity,
Uncompromising, stern, which planted deep
The holy roots of that wide tree which bore
This blossom of liberty which we pluck to-day :

Which taught us what we all too soon forget,
No earthly generation stands alone,
But is the link in some vast mystic chain
Extending downward from the ancient days ;

Remembering that allegiance which we owe
The blood we bear, the tongue our fathers forged
From out the rude and barbarous dreams of those
Who gave us primal being. This our work,
To build, to weld, replenish, and subdue.

Not like blind force which treads this earth like iron,
And makes the continents tremble ; not by greed
Or grim political craft ; but by that power,
That sad sincerity of the Perfect Man.

Yea, this my message ! Life is short and stern,
And ours at best a feeble, cabined will.

COMMEMORATION ODE

Our mind is finite :—But the soul of man,
Which hopes and trembles, suffers and aspires,
Rebukes his pettier moments ; its vast dreams
Proclaim our origin high, our destiny great,
And possibilities limitless like the sea.

BEYOND THE HILLS OF DREAM

Over the mountains of sleep, my Love,
Over the hills of dream,
Beyond the walls of care and fate,
Where the loves and memories teem,
We come to a world of fancy free,
Where hearts forget to weep ;—
Over the mountains of dream, my Love,
Over the hills of sleep.

Over the hills of care, my Love,
Over the mountains of dread,
We come to a valley, glad and vast,
Where we meet the long-lost dead :
And there the gods in splendour dwell,
In a land where all is fair,
Over the mountains of dread, my Love,
Over the hills of care.

Over the mountains of dream, my Love,
Over the hills of sleep ;—
Could we but come to that heart's desire,
Where the harvests of fancy reap,
Then we would know the old joys and hopes,
The longings of youth's bright gleam,
Over the mountains of sleep, my Love,
Over the hills of dream.

Yea, there the sweet old years have rest,
 And there my heart would be,
 Amid the glad ones loved of yore,
 At the sign of the Fancy Free ;
 And there the old lips would repeat
 Earth's memories o'er and o'er,
 Over the mountains of might-have-been,
 Over the hills of yore.

Unto that valley of dreams, my Love,
 If we could only go,
 Beyond the mountains of heart's despair,
 The hills of winter and snow,
 Then we would come to those happy isles,
 Those shores of blossom and wing,
 Over the mountains of waiting, my Love,
 Over the hills of spring.

And there where the woods are scarlet and gold,
 And the apples are red on the tree,
 The heart of autumn is never old
 In that country where we would be.
 And how would we come to that land, my Love ?
 Follow the midnight stars,
 That swim and gleam in a milk-white stream,
 Over the night's white bars.

Or follow the trail of the sunset red
 That beacons the dying deeps
 Of day's wild borders down the edge
 Of silence, where evening sleeps ;
 Or take the road that the morning wakes,
 When he whitens his first rosebeam,
 Over the mountains of glory, my Love,
 Over the hills of dream.

BEYOND THE HILLS OF DREAM 123

Sometime, sometime we will go, my Love,
When winter loosens to spring,
And all the spirits of joy are ajog,
 'er the wild-bird's wing,—
When winter and sorrow have opened their doors
To set love's prisoners free,
Over the mountains of woe, my Love,
Over the hills of dree.

And when we reach there we will know
The faces we knew of yore,
The lips that kissed, the hands that clasped,
When memory loosens her store ;
And we will drink to the long dead years,
In that inn of the golden gleam,
Over the mountains of sleep, my Love,
Over the hills of dream.

And all the joys we missed, my Love,
And all the hopes we knew,
The dreams of life we dreamed in vain,
When youth's red blossoms blew ;
And all the hearts that throbbed for us,
In the past so sunny and fair,
We will meet and greet in that golden land,
Over the hills of care.

Over the mountains of sleep, my Love,
Over the hills of dream,
Beyond the walls of care and fate,
Where the loves and memories teem,
We come to a land of fancy free,
Where hearts forget to weep,
Over the mountains of dream, my Love,
Over the hills of sleep.

LOVE

Love came at dawn when all the world was fair,
When crimson glories, bloom, and song were rife;
Love came at dawn when hope's wings fanned the air,
And murmured, 'I am life.'

Love came at even when the day was done,
When heart and brain were tired, and slumber
pressed;
Love came at eve, shut out the sinking sun,
And whispered, 'I am rest.'

LINES ON A RE-READING OF PARTS OF
THE OLD TESTAMENT

(DEDICATED TO THE RT. REV. W. BOYD-CARPENTER)

SUBLIMITY ! Sublimity ! I lay thee down ;
Great Volume of the ages ! older far
Than Cheops' Pyramid or the Parthenon ;
And yet as new as yester-even's star

That came and burned so bright and pure across
The world's great weariness and day's decline.
What are all earth's ambitions, gain and loss,
Her hopes ephemeral, when thou art mine ?

Thou stand'st, a crystal well of water pure,
Amid those fevered fonts of heathen wine,
Graven in truth's deep rock that shall endure,
So greatly human, yet so all divine !

This age doth press upon me like a vast,
Grim adamantine wall of evil doom ;
But when I drink thy living draught, I cast
Aside this vesture of material gloom ;

These curtains of mortality fall apart ;
And out, and up, beyond, eternally,
Those stairways of God's ages ; and man's part
In all that greatness, gone, and yet to be !

A LAKE MEMORY

THE lake comes throbbing in with voice of pain
Across these flats, athwart the sunset's glow ;
I see her face, I know her voice again,
Her lips, her breath, O God, as long ago.

To live the sweet past over I would fain,
As lives the day in the red sunset's fire,
That all these wild, wan marshlands now would stain,
With the dawn's memories, loves, and flushed desire.

I call her back across the vanished years,
Nor vain—a white-armed phantom fills her place ;
Its eyes the wind-blown sunset fires, its tears
This rain of spray that blows about my face.

TO THE CANADIAN PATRIOT

THIS is the land of the rugged north ; these wide
Life-yielding fields, these inland oceans ; these
Vast rivers moving seaward their wide floods,
Majestic music ; these sky-bounded plains
And heaven-topping mountains ; these iron shores,
Facing toward either ocean ; fit home alone
For the indomitable and nobly strong.

In that dread hour of evil, when thy land
Is rent with strifes and ground with bigotry,
And all looks dark for honour, and poor Truth
Walks cloaked in shadow, alien from her marts ;
Go forth alone and view the earth and sky,
And those eternal waters, moving, vast,
In endless duty, ever rendering pure
These mild or angry airs ; the gladdening sun
Reviving, changing, weaving life from death,
These elemental uses Nature puts
Her patient hours to ; and then thou shalt know
A larger vista, glean a greater truth
Than man has put into his partial creeds
Of blinded feud and custom ; thou shalt know
That Nature's laws are greater and more sure,
More calm, more patient, wise and tolerant,
Than these poor, futile efforts of our dream ;
That human life is stronger in its yearning
Than those blind walls our impotence builds between
And underneath this calloused rind we see—
As the obedient tides the swaying moon—
A mightier law the whole wide world obeys ;
And far behind these mists of human vision
God's great horizon stands out fixed and sure.

STELLA FLAMMARUM

AN ODE TO HALLEY'S COMET

STRANGE wanderer out of the deeps,
Whence, journeying, come you ?
From what far, unurned sleeps
Did fate foredoom you,
Returning for ever again,
Through the surgings of man,
A flaming, awesome portent of dread
Down the centuries' span ?

Riddle ! from the dark unwrung
By all earth's sages ;—
God's fiery torch from His hand outflung,
To flame through the ages ;
Thou Satan of planets eterne,
'Mid angry path,
Chained, in circlings vast, to burn
Out ancient wrath.

By what dread hand first loosed
From fires eternal ?
With majesties dire infused
Of force supernal,
Takest thy headlong way
O'er the highways of space ?
O wonderful, blossoming flower of fear
On the sky's far face !

What secret of destiny's will
In thy wild burning ?
What portent dire of humanity's ill
In thy returning ?
Or art thou brand of love
In masking of bale ?
And bringest thou ever some mystical surcease
For all who wail ?

Perchance, O Visitor dread,
Thou hast thine appointed
Task, thou bolt of the vast outsped !
With God's anointed,
Performest some endless toil
In the universe wide,
Feeding or curing some infinite need
Where the vast worlds ride.

Once, only once, thy face
Will I view in this breathir , ;
Just for a space thy majesty trace
'Mid eæ 'a mad seething ;
Ere I go hew 'o my place,
As thou to thy deeps,
Thou flambent core of a universe dread,
Where all else sleeps.

But thou and man's spirit are one,
Thou poet ! thou flaming
Soul of the dauntless sun,
Past all reclaiming !
One in that red unrest,
That yearning, that surge,
That mounting surf of the infinite dream,
O'er eternity's verge.

SUNSET

THE far, wild splendours of the west
In purple currents run,
Where all the day-winds beat against
The bastions of the sun.

Till rising, sinking, on the rim
Of night that looms afar,
The day-wall fades and crumbles down
Across the sunset's bar.

And up above the cooling verge
The night comes like a boon,
Where all the sky and waters meet
At rising of the moon.

The rising moon and one pale star
Lift o'er the water's edge ;—
And all the ancient woes of earth
Are moaning in the sedge.

THE DRYAD

HER soul was sown with the seed of the tree
Of old when the earth was young ;
And glad with the light of its majesty
The light of her beautiful being upgrew.
And the winds that swept over land and sea,
And like a harper the great boughs strung,
Whispered her all things new.

The tree reached forth to the sun and the wind
And towered to heaven above.
But she was the soul that under its rind
Whispered its joy through the whole wood's span,
Sweet and glad and tender and kind ;
For her love for the tree was a holier love
Than the love of woman for man.

The seasons came and the seasons went
And the woodland music rang ;
And under her wide umbrageous tent,
Hidden for ever from mortal eye,
She sang earth's beauty and wonderment.
But men never knew the spirit that sang
This music too wondrous to die.

Only nature, for ever young,
And her children for ever true,
Knew the beauty of her who sung,
And her tender, glad love for the tree :

Till on her music the wild hawk hung
From his eyrie high in the blue,
To drink her melody free.

And the creatures of earth would creep from their
haunts
To stare with their wilding eyes,
To hearken those rhythms of earth's romance,
That never the ear of mortal hath heard ;
Till the elfin squirrels would caper and dance,
And the hedgehog's sleepy and shy surprise
Would grow to the thought of a bird.

And the pale wood-flowers from their cradles of dew,
Where they rocked them the whole night long,
While the dark wheeled round and the stars looked
through
Into the great wood's slumbrous breast,
Till the grey of the night like a mist outblew ;
Hearkened the piercing joy of her song
That sank like a star in their rest.

But all things come to an end at last
When the wings of being are furled,
And there blew one night a maddening blast
From those wastes where ships dismantle and drown,
That ravaged the forest and thundered past,
And in the wreck of that ruined world
The dryad's tree went down.

When the pale stars dimmed their tapers of gold,
And over the night's round rim
The day rose sullen and ragged and cold,
Over that wind-swept, desolate wild,

THE DRYAD

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Where the huge trunks lay like giants of old,
Prone, slain on some battlefield, silent and grim,
The wood-creatures, curious, mild,

Searching their solitudes, found her there,
Like a snowdrift out in the morn ;
One lily arm round the beech-trunk bare,
One curved, cold, under her elfin head,
With the beechen shine in her nut-brown hair,
And the pallor of dawn on her face, love-lorn,
Beautiful, passionless, dead.

SCOTLAND

THE WORLD MOTHER

By crag and lonely moor she stands,
This mother of half a world's great men,
And kens them far by sea-wracked lands,
Or Orient jungle or Western fen.

And far out 'mid the mad turmoil,
Or where the desert places keep
Their lonely hush, her children toil,
Or, wrapt in wide-world honour, sleep.

By Egypt's sands or Western wave,
She kens her latest heroes rest,
With Scotland's honour o'er each grave,
And Britain's flag above each breast.

And some at home—her mother love
Keeps crooning wind-songs o'er their graves,
Where Arthur's castle looms above,
Or Strathy storms or Solway raves ;

Or Lomond unto Nevis bends
In olden love of clouds and dew ;
Where Trossachs unto Stirling sends
Greetings that build the years anew.

Out where the miles of heather sweep,
Her dust of legend in his breast,
'Neath aged Dryburgh's aisle and keep
Her wizard Walter takes his rest.

And her loved ploughman, he of Ayr,
More loved than any singer loved
By heart of man amid those rare,
High souls the world hath tried and proved ;

Whose songs are first to heart and tongue
Wherever Scotsmen greet together,
And, far out alien scenes among,
Go mad at the glint of a sprig of heather.

And he, her latest wayward child,
Her Louis of the magic pen,
Who sleeps by tropic crater piled,
Far, far, alas, from misted glen ;

Who loved her, knew her, drew her so,
Beyond all common poet's whim ;—
In dreams the whaups are calling low,
In sooth her heart is woe for him.

And they, her warriors, greater none
E'er drew the blade of daring forth,
Her Colin under Indian sun,
Her Donald of the fighting north.

Or he, her greatest hero, he
Who sleeps somewhere by Nilus' sands,
Grave Gordon, mightiest of those free,
Great captains of her fighting bands.

Yea, these and myriad myriads more,
Who stormed the fort or ploughed the main,
To free the wave or win the shore,
She calls in vain, she calls in vain.

Brave sons of her, far severed wide
By purpling peak or reeling foam ;
From Western ridge or Orient side,
She calls them home, she calls them home.

And far, from east to western sea,
The answering word comes back to her,
' Our hands were slack, our hopes were free,
We answered to the blood astir ;

' The life by kelpie loch was dull,
The homeward slothful work was done,
We followed where the world was full,
To dree the weird our fates had spun.

' We built the brig, we reared the town,
We spanned the earth with lightning gleam,
We ploughed, we fought, 'mid smile and frown,
Where all the world's four corners teem.

' But under all the surge of life,
The mad race-fight for mastery,
Though foremost in the surgent strife,
Our hearts went back, went back to thee.'

For the Scotsman's speech is wise and slow,
And the Scotsman's thought it is hard to ken,
But through all the yearnings of men that go,
His heart is the heart of the northern glen.

His song is the song of the windy moor,
And the humming pipes of the squirling din,
And his love is the love of the shieling door,
And the smell of the smoking peat within.

And nohap how much of the alien blood
Is crossed with the strain that holds him fast,
'Mid the world's great ill and the world's great
good,
He yearns to the mother of men at last.

For there 's something strong and something true
In the wind where the sprig of heather is blown,
And something great in the blood so blue
That makes him stand like a man alone.

Yea, give him the road and loose him free,
He sets his teeth to the fiercest blast,
For there 's never a toil in a far countrie,
But a Scotsman tackles it hard and fast.

He builds their commerce, he sings their songs,
He weaves their creeds with an iron twist,
And, making of laws or righting of wrongs,
He grinds it all as the Scotsman's grist.

Yea, there by crag and moor she stands,
This mother of half a world's great men,
And out of the heart of her haunted lands
She calls her children home again.

And, over the glens and the wild sea floors,
She peers so still as she counts her cost,
With her whaups low-calling over the moors,
'Woe, woe, for the great ones she hath lost.'

THE FIRST SNOW

OVER the querulous age of the grey old year
Heaven its mantle of white sends softly down ;
And far over mountain and fell and woodland sere
Its folds are thrown.

Hushed are the clamours of autumn ; old ocean's
~~noise~~
Less loud in his desolate caverns ; the lonely hills
Are capped with its silence ; and all earth's ruin
o'erthrown
Its great dream fills.

Under the high-arched aisles of the ancient woods,
In those corridors solemn and dim where the sky-
patches peer,
A mystical spirit of joy and solitude broods
O'er the tomb of the year.

And here I have loved, in those hours of the heart's
high dream,
To walk with the silence, and hark to that spirit
aglow
Of the trance of forest and sky and mountain and
stream,
In the pause of the snow.

LIFE-SPENT

Out of the strife of conflict,
Out of the nightmare wild,
Thou bringest me, spent and broken,
Like the life of a little child.

Like the spume of a far-spent wave,
Or a wreck cast up from the sea,
Out from the pride of being
My soul returns to Thee.

Thou, who only art Master,
Lord of the weak and the strong,
Who makest the kings of earth's struggles
As the far refrain of a song.

And Thou teachest me all is as nothing
Save to follow the fate love willed,
And dree life's weird to the final port,
Where the tumult of being is stilled :

Where the woe that wrecked me is vanished,
And the pride that stayed me is gone :
And only the feeling of eventime,
When the toil of the world is done :—

O, Master of being and slumber,
When the pageant and pæan have passed,
Take me where Thy great silence
Is vaster than all that is vast.

QUEBEC

(TERCENTENARY)

At last 'tis gone, that fever of fair days,
And silence broods o'er that late Babylon.
The mighty fleet, the marching hosts have gone,
The radiant week becomes a memory.
The tired city, returning to its tasks,
Takes up once more its daily duty's round,
Fulfilling, godlike, ancient destiny.

But is the vanished pageant all a dream
At morning shattered by the cruel return
To grim, material round of serf-like tasks
Of mimes who, mirthless, weave some hideous web,
And, ever weaving, never know the end?

Hearken! thou ancient storied River Crag!
Give answer from thy mists of thy great hill!
Lifting thy titan shoulders, mantled green,
And teach the world—yea, thy poor children blind.
Rend wide this veil of gross, material sleep!
Wake Neptune from his foamy, spermy tent,
And Pan, to sing, from out his forests green!

What is that lesson thou wouldst have us learn?
What is that dream which lurketh in thy sleep?
What visions 'neath thine eyelids ere the dawn?
Wouldst thou, old Crag, worn of earth's aged despairs,

QUEBEC

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Weary of dark dominion, like that fiend,
Planet o'ershadowing, bereaved of light,
Upon thy shoulders huge uplift the morn ?

Meanwhile thou broodest where vast mountains frown,
And thy great river seaward ever melts
Beyond Orleans for many a weary mile
Into the lonely evening, purpling bleak ;
As when, in ages gone, Atlantean gods,
Grave titan children of the early world,
Pushed here their wandering prow, and gazed in awe :
Or 'chance famed Jason, with immortal crew,
Moored here the Grecian ship, fearing thy grim
Gates heraclean, to the Hesperides.

THE END OF THE FURROW

WHEN we come to the end of the furrow,
When our last day's work is done,
We will drink of the long red shaft of light
That slants from the westering sun.

We will turn from the field of our labour,
From the warm earth glad and brown,
And wend our feet up that village street,
And with our folk lie down.

Yea, after the long toil, surcease,
Rest to the hearts that roam,
When we join in the mystic silence of eve,
The glad procession home.

THE LAST PRAYER

MASTER of Life, the day is done ;
 My sun of life is sinking low ;
 I watch the hours slip one by one
 And hark the night-wind and the snow.

And must Thou shut the morning out,
 And dim the eye that loved to see ;
 Silence the melody and rout,
 And seal the joys of earth for me ?

And must Thou banish all the hope,
 The large horizon's eagle-swim,
 The splendour of the far-off slope
 That ran about the world's great rim,

That rose with morning's crimson rays
 And grew to noonday's gloried dome,
 Melting to even's purple haze
 When all the hopes of earth went home ?

Yea, Master of this ruined house,
 The mortgage closed, outruns the lease ;
 Long since is hushed the gay carouse,
 And now the windowed lights must cease.

The doors all barred, the shutters up,
 Dismantled, empty, wall and floor,
 And now for one grim eve to sup
 With Death, the bailiff, at the door.

THE LAST PRAYER

Yea, I will take the gloomward road
Where fast the arctic nights set in,
To reach the bourne of that abode
Which Thou hast kept for all my kin.

And all life's splendid joys forego,
Walled in with night and senseless stone,
If at the last my heart might know
Through all the dark one joy alone.

Yea, Thou mayst quench the latest spark
Of life's weird day's expectancy,
Roll down the thunders of the dark
And close the light of life for me.

Melt all the splendid blue above
And let these magic wonders die,
If Thou wilt only leave me Love,
And Love's heart-brother, Memory.

Though all the hopes of every race
Crumbled in one red crucible,
And melted, mingled into space,
Yet, Master, Thou wert merciful.

UNABSOLVED

A DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

This poem is founded on the confession of a man who went with one of the expeditions to save Sir John Franklin's party, and who, being sent ahead, saw signs of them, but through cowardice was afraid to tell.

O FATHER, hear my tale, then pity me,
For even God His pity hath withdrawn.
O death was dread and awful in those days !
You prate of hell and punishment to come,
And endless torments made for those who sin.
Stern priest, put down your cross and hearken me ;—
I see for ever a white glinting plain,
From night to night across the twinkling dark,
A world of cold and fear and dread and death,
And poor lost ones who starve and pinch and die ;—
I could have saved them—I—yea, even I.
You talk of hell ! Is hell to see poor frames,
Wan, leathery cheeks, and dull, despairing eyes,
From whence a low-flamed madness, ebbing out,
Goes slowly deathward through the eerie hours ?
To hear for ever pitiless, icy winds
Stir in the shivering canvas of the tent,
With idle, brute curiosity nature hath,
While out around, one universe of death,
Stretches the loveless, hearthless, Arctic night ?

This is my doom, it sitteth by my side,
And never leaves me through the desolate years.

Go, take your hell to men who never lived,
Save as the slow world wendeth, sluggish, dull.
Even they must suffer also, poor bleak ones,
Then is your feeble comfort nothing worth.
You tell me to have hope, God will forgive.
O priest, can God forgive a sin like mine ?
You say He is all-loving, did He lie
With me that night amid the eyeless dark,
And writhe with me, and whisper, ' Save thyself,
That way to North lies cold and age and death,
And awful failure on men's awèd tongues,
To linger years hereafter ; southward lies
Home, heat, and love, and sweet, blood-pulsing life,—
Life, with its morns and eves and glad to-morrows,
And joy and hope for many days to be ? '

Did He, I say, lie with me there that night,
And know that awful tragedy beyond,
And my poor tragedy enacted there ?
Then must He feel Him since as I have felt,
And live that hideous misery in His heart.
And, knowing this, I say unto thee, priest,
He could not be a God and say, forgive.
You plead my soul's salvation the one end
And aim of all my thought ; then hearken, priest,
For this my sin hath made me more than wise :—
That seems to me the one great sin I sinned
In selling all to save mine evil self.

Stay, hearken, priest, and haunt me not with hopes
As futile as those icy-fingered winds
That stirred the canvas there that Arctic night.
I bid thee hark and mumble not thy prayers
Like August bees heard in a summer round,
That drone afar, but keep them for the dead,

The dull-eared dead who sleep and heed them not.
You say the Church absolves, you speak of peace ;
You talk of what not even God can do,
Be He but what you make Him. In my light,—
And mine is light of one who knows the case,
The facts, the reasons, and hath weighed them too,—
There is but one absolver, the absolved.

For I, since that far, fatal Arctic night,
Have been alone in some dread, shadowy court,
Where I was judge and guilty prisoner too.
Words, words are empty ; were life built on words,
How rich the poor would grow, the weak be strong,
The hateful loving, and the scornful weak !—
The king would be a peasant, and the poor
A king in his own right ; the murderer, red
From his foul guilt, would pass to God's own breast,
And all damned things, long damned of earth's consent,
And some dread law much older far than we,
Would blossom righteous under heaven's face.

Still fared we north across that frozen waste
Of icy horror ringed with awful night,
To seek the living in a world of death ;
And as we fared a terror grew and grew
About my heart like madness, till I dreamed
A vague desire to flee by night and creep,
By steel-blue, windless plain and haunted wood,
And wizened shore and headland, once more south.
There, as we went, the days grew wan and shrunk,
And nights grew vast and weird and beautiful,
Walled with flame-glories of auroral light,
Ringing the frozen world with myriad spears
Of awful splendour there across the night.
And ever anon a shadowy, spectral pack

Of gleaming eyes and panting, lurid tongues
Haunted the lone horizon toward the south.

Long day by day a desolation went
Where our wan faces fared, o'er all that waste ;
And I was young and filled with love of life,
And fear of ugly death as some weird black,
The enemy of love and youth and joy ;
A lonely, ruined bridge at edge of night,
Fading in blackness at the outer end.
And those were cold, stern men I went with there,
Who held their lives as men do hold a gift
Not worth the keeping ; men who told dread tales,
That made a madness in me of that waste
And all its hellish, lonely solitude,
And set my heart abeating for the south,
Until that awful desolation ringed
My reason round, and shrunk my fearful heart.
Yea, Father, I had saved them but for this ;—
Why did they send me on alone, ahead,
Poor me, the only weak one of that band,
Who was too much of coward to show my fear ?
Why did life give me that mad fear of death,
To make me selfish at the very last ?
Why did God give those men into my hand,
And leave them victim to a craven fear
That walked those lonely wastes in form of man ?

No, Father, take your cross, mine is a pain
That only distant ages can outburn.
Forgiveness ! No, you know not what you say ;
You churchmen mumble words as charmers do,
And talk of God and love so glib and pat,
And think you reach men's souls and give them light,
When all the time my spirit is to you

A land unfound, a region far removed,
Where walk dim ghosts of thoughts and fears and pains
You never dreamed of. What know you of souls
Like this of mine that hath girt misery's sum
And found the black with which God veils His face ?

Then hearken, priest, and learn thee of my woe,
For I have lain afar on northern nights,
By star-filled wastes, and coned it o'er and o'er,
And thought on God, and life, and many things,
And all the baffling mystery of the dark.
And I have held that awful rendezvous
Of naked self with self alone and bare,
And knew myself as men have never known ;—
Have fought the duel, flashing hilt to hilt,
And blade to blade, of flesh and spirit there,
Until I lay a weak and wounded thing,
Like some poor, mangled bird the sportsman leaves
Writhing and twisting there amid the dark.

You talk of ladders leading up to light,
Of windows bursting on the perfect day,
Of dawns grown ruddy on the blackest night.
Yea, I have groped about the muffled walls,
And beat my spirit's prison all in vain,
Only to find them shrouded fold on fold ;
And still the cruel, icy stars look down,
And my dread memory stayeth with me still.

It was a strange, mad quest we went upon,
To seek the living in the lifeless North.
For days, and days, and long, lone, loveless nights,
We set our faces toward the Arctic sky,
And threaded wastes of that lone wilderness,
Beyond the lands of summer and glad spring.

Beyond the regions kind of flower and bird,
Past glint horizons of auroral gleams,
A haunted world of winter's wizened sleep,
Where death, a giant, aged, and stark and wan,
Kept fast the entrance of those sunless caves
Where hides the day beyond the icy seas.

Then life ebbed lower in the bravest heart,
And spake the leader, ' If in ten more days
We chance on nothing, then will we return,
And set our faces once more to the south.'
For that dread land began to close us in,
With cold and hunger, bit at our poor limbs,
Till life grew there a feeble, flickering flame,
Amid the snows and ice-floes of that land.
Then ten days crept out shrunk and grey and wan,
With nothing but the lonely, haunted waste.
Then spake the leader, ' If in five more days ! '
Then parcelled out those five grey, haggard days,
While life to me grew like an ebbing tide,
That surged far out from some dread death-like strand.
And horror came upon me like the night,
That seemed to gird the world in desolate walls.
Then spake the leader, ' If in three more days ! '

But when the third day waned we came, at last,
Unto the shores of some dread, lonely sea,
That gloomed to North and night, and far beyond,
Where ruined straits and headlands loomed and sank,
There seemed the awful endings of the world.

Then spake the leader, ' Let us go not yet,
But stay a little ere we turn us south,
Perchance, poor souls, they might be somewhere here.'
And then to me, ' You go, for you are young

And strong, and life throbs quickest in your veins,
And you have eyes more strong to see, for ours
Are dimmed by the dread frost-mists of this land ;
And creep out there beyond yon gleaming ledge,
And bring me word of what you there may see.
And if you meet no sign of mast or sail,
Or hull or wreck, or mark of living soul,
Then we will turn our faces to the south ;
For this great ocean's vastness hems us in,
And death here nightly creeps from strand to strand,
And binds with girth of black the gleaming world.'

Then, whispering ' Madness, madness,' to the dark
I crept me fearful o'er that gleaming ledge,
And saw but night and awful gulfs of dark,
And weird ice-mountains looming desolate there,
And far beyond the vastness of that sea.
And then—O God, why died I not that hour ?—
Amid the gleaming flocs far up that shore,
So far it seemed that man's foot scarce could go,
The certain, tapering outline of a mast,
And one small patch of rag ; and then I felt
No man could ever live to reach that place,
And horror seized me of that haunted world,
That I should die there and be froze for aye,
Amid the ice-core of its awful heart.
Then crept I back, the weak ghost of a life,
A miserable, shaking, confined fear,
And spake, ' I saw but ice and winds and dark,
And the dread vastness of that desolate sea.'
Again he spake, ' Creep out once more and look ;
Perchance your sight was misled by the gleam.'
And then once more I crept out on that ledge,
And saw again the night and awful dark,
And that poor beckoning mast that haunts me yet ;

And as I lay those moments seemed to grow,
As men have felt in looking down long years,
And there I chose 'twixt evil and the good,
And took the evil ; then began my hell,
And back I crept with that black lie on lips,
And spake again, ' I only saw the night,
And those weird mountains and the awful deep.'
At that he moaned and spake, ' Poor souls ! poor souls !
Then they are doomed if ever men were doomed.'
Whereat a sudden, great auroral flame
Filled all the heaven, lighting wastes and sea,
And came a wondrous shock across the world,
Like sounds of far-off battle where hosts die,
As if God thundered back mine awful lie,
And I fell in a heap where all was black.

When next I lived, we were full three days south,
And two had died upon that dreadful march ;
Then memory came, and I went laughing mad,
But kept mine awful secret to this hour.

No, priest, you can do nothing ; pain like mine
Must smoulder out in its own agony,
Till there be naught but ashes at the last.
But something 'mid the pauses of the dark
Doth teach me that I am not all alone ;
For I have dreamed in my dread, maddest hour,
An awful shadow, blacker than my black,
Went ever with me. Harken to me now :
I never felt a hand or saw a face,
I never knew a comfort more than sleep,
The winters they are only barren snows,
And age is hard, and death waits at the last.
But I have felt in some dim, shapeless way,
As memories long remembered after youth,

UNABSOLVED

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That back of all there is some mighty will,
Beyond the little dreams that we are here,
Beyond the misery of our days and years,
Beyond the outmost system's outmost rim,
Where wrinkled suns in awful blackness swim,
A wondrous mercy that is working still.

HOW ONE WINTER CAME IN THE
LAKE REGION

For weeks and weeks the autumn world stood still,
Clothed in the shadow of a smoky haze ;
The fields were dead, the wind had lost its will,
And all the lands were hushed by wood and hill,
In those grey, withered days.

Behind a mist the blear sun rose and set,
At night the moon would nestle in a cloud ;
The fisherman, a ghost, did cast his net ;
The lake its shores forgot to chafe and fret,
And hushed its caverns loud.

Far in the smoky woods the birds were mute,
Save that from blackened tree a jay would scream,
Or far in swamps the lizard's lonesome lute
Would pipe in thirst, or by some gnarled root
The tree-toad trilled his dream.

From day to day still hushed the season's mood,
The streams stayed in their runnels shrunk and dry ;
Suns rose aghast by wave and shore and wood,
And all the world, with ominous silence, stood
In weird expectancy :

N

HOW ONE WINTER CAME IN LAKE REGION 155

When one strange night the sun like blood went down.
Flooding the heavens in a ruddy hue ;
Red grew the lake, the sere fields parched and brown,
Red grew the marshes where the creeks stole down,
But never a wind-breath blew.

That night I felt the winter in my veins,
A joyous tremour of the icy glow ;
And woke to hear the North's wild vibrant strains,
While far and wide, by withered woods and plains,
Fast fell the driving snow.

THE MESSAGE OF NIGHT

I STAND beneath the night's wide vast,
The awful curtains, dim, outrolled ;
And know time but a tempest blast,
And life a thing the hand may hold—

A thing the Nubian, Dark, may shut
In his closed palm-grasp, black and rude,
Like dust in a kernel of a nut
'Mid vasts of night's infinitude.

And Reason whispers : Why debate
A moment's thought, why breathe this breath ?
For all are gone, the low, the great ;
And mighty lord of all is Death.

Yea, Egypt built her ruined dream,
And Greece knew beauty's perfect bliss,
Then Science fanned her taper gleam—
And all for this, and all for this :

That when the fires of time burned out,
The earth a barren ball should roll,
With wrinkled winter wrapt about,
And night eterne from pole to pole.

And all the dreams of seers and kings,
The pomps and pageants of the past,
The loves and vain imaginings,
Ground into glacial dust at last.

THE MESSAGE OF NIGHT

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Ah ! no such creed, my soul, for thee,
As, underneath the night's wide bars,
They speak with love's infinity—
God's wondrous angels of the stars.

And something in my heart—some light,
Some splendour, science cannot weigh—
Beats round the shores of this dim night
The surges of a mightier day.

Though all the loves of those who loved
Be vanished into empty air,
Though all the dreams of ages proved
But wrecks of beautiful despair,

Though all the dust of those who fought,
Be scattered to the midnight's main,
No noble life was lived for naught,
No martyr death was died in vain.

'NOT UNTO ENDLESS DARK'

Not unto endless dark do we go down,
Though all the wisdom of wide earth said yea,
Yet my fond heart would throb eternal nay.
Night, prophet of morning, wears her starry crown,
And jewels with hope her murkiest shades that frown.
Death's doubt is kernelled in each prayer we pray.
Eternity but night in some vast day
Of God's far-off red flame of love's renown.

Not unto endless dark. We may not know
The distant deeps to which our hopings go,
The tidal shores where ebbs our fleeting breath :
But over ill and dread and doubt's fell dart,
Sweet hope, eternal, holds the human heart,
And love laughs down the desolate dusks of death.

THE DREAM DIVINE

BEYOND the wild wrack of her evens,
Earth's mornings I trace ;
And back of the individual failure and doom,
Looms the hope of the race.

The race which stands for God and His ways
In the mystery of man,
And that tragic web and woof of his dream and his deed,
Down the centuries' span.

As the close, low view of the valley,
Its walls shut in ;—
So this cabined vista of life,
With its blindness and sin :

As the wide, vast sweep of the mountainward
Opens that glow ;—
So the far, vast visions, dim but divine, of the race
That Godward go.

Then sorrow not, doubt not, my soul,
Nor despair that thy dreams come not true ;
They will re-rise and re-build in those hopings eterne
Of your children anew.

For the glory of earth is not dead
With the day in the west ;
And of all love's far, dim dawnings of hope unborn,
God's latest are best.

CAPTIVITY

THOU, O my soul,
Thou art as an eagle
Caged in this agonised
 Iron of earth's gloom ;
Evermore beating
At these confining,
Effort-confounding,
 Bars of thy doom.

Evermore chafing,
Restless and longing,
For those far rose-peaks,
 Splendid, of light ;—
That large sky-vista,
That unfettered freedom,
 Wide for thy flight.

Here thou art caged,
Thy hooded eye darkened,
Thy soaring wings wounded,
 Thy splendour curbed fast ;
That somewhere and sometime,
Erstwhile enfranchised,
Met the red sunlance,
 Measured the vast.

CAPTIVITY

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Here in thy prison
Of fettered contumely,
Environ ignoble,
All high effort wronging ;
Thou canst never soar to
Those vasts of the sunlit,
Far heights of thy longing.

But thou, O my soul,
Out of these cage-bars,
Forth to thy freedom,
Unshackled, alone,
Thou wilt go outward,
Skyward and sunward,
Vastward and strengthward,
Back to thine own.

Where on those far-peaks,
Thou with thy kindred,
Kinglike and soaring,
Eyeing the sun ;
Thou wilt drink deep of that
Vastness and glory,
Where sky-winds run.

Forgetting this life-curbed,
Prisoned, flesh-shackled,
Earth-enmanacled
Thing that thou wast ;—
There in thine eyrie,
Thou wilt regain thee
All thou hast longed for,
All thou hast lost.

INVOCATION

AND Thou, who art of all things Lord,
By whom all perish or dream,
Who wakest the flower, the star, the love,
The mighty world or the gleam ;

Who after sad winter wakest the rose,
After midnight the dawn,
By whose dread word the children of earth
Up thy mountains have gone ;

Teach me the lesson that Mother Earth
Teacheth her children each hour,
When she keeps in her deeps the basic root,
And wears on her breast the flower.

And as the brute to the basic root
In the infinite cosmic plan,
So in the plan of the infinite mind
The flower of the brute is man ;—

Man, who blossoms in beauty and love
And wisdom's wondrous bloom,
And climbs by spiral stairways dread,
To the dawn of the world's great doom.

And when doth come that marvellous change,
Thou master of being and death,
O let me die as the great dead died,
Not passing of instinct's breath ;—

INVOCATION

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Let me lie down with a loftier thought
Than passing of beast and leaf ;
That the cry of human soul for soul
Is greater than nature's grief ;

That man is nearer the mountains of God
Than in those ages when
He slept the sleep of the tiger and fox,
And woke to the strife of the den.

And when from the winter of Thy wild death
Thine angels of sunlight call,
Waken me unto my highest, my best,
Or waken me not at all.

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